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ABSTRACT

This document is intended to help learning organizations and practitioners meet the needs of their black and minority ethnic adult students. The introduction explains how the guide was developed and discusses the concept of "color blindness." The next six sections examine the following topics: (1) social and economic issues; (2) effective strategies for reaching black and minority ethnic learners; (3) support for learning; (4) curriculum issues; (5) staff development and organizational change; and (6) equal opportunities. Each section includes some or all of the following: examples of good practice; case studies; and checklists. The conclusion recaps the guide's objectives and key messages. A section entitled "Resources" presents various supplementary materials, including the following: examples of stereotyping and strategies for combating stereotyping; information about the role of faith and spirituality in black and minority ethnic people's lives; strategies for creating organizational change; a questionnaire on equal opportunities in the workplace; a checklist for improving access; an exploration of the implications of equal opportunities issues within the curriculum; a diversity quiz; good practices in developing appropriate resources; and factors to consider when evaluating, developing, and selecting suitable learning materials. A glossary and lists of 36 suggested publications are included. (Contains 24 references.) (MN)

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ED 459 363

Colour blind

A practical guide to teaching black adult learners

Alyson Malach

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Contents

Overall aims v

Acknowledgements vii

Foreword ix

Introduction 1

Social and economic issues 9

Effective strategies for reaching black and minority ethnic learners 23

Support for learning 47

Curriculum issues 61

Staff development and organisational change 69

What are equal opportunities all about? 79

Conclusion 83

Resources 85

Glossary of terms used in this guide 105

Further reading 111

References 113

Overall aims

- to support learning organisations in their efforts to challenge diversity and widen participation in learning for black and minority ethnic adults.
- to encourage education providers to take positive steps to work more effectively with small black voluntary and community organisations.

Overall objectives

It is intended that the guide will:

- support practitioners in creating and managing curriculum change and development to meet more effectively the needs of black and minority ethnic adults.
- discuss social exclusion, lack of opportunities and attitudes of practitioners in relation to black and minority ethnic adults, and highlight the impact of discriminatory practices, attitudes and behaviour on this group.
- share ideas, information and practice around building equality and anti-racist strategies into organisations' work in relation to policies, programmes and action.
- help organisations gain access to black voluntary and community organisations to establish effective partnerships to support their work in meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic adults.
- share and develop good practice in tackling under-representation and under-achievement of black and minority ethnic adults in post-16 education.
- serve as a tool for professional development.

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Manchester Adult Education Service

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Foreword

National Government has raised the profile of education as a political and policy issue in an unimaginable way since the former Conservative Government introduced the Education Reform Act in 1988. What the Bill that preceded that Act, and just about every other policy initiative and piece of legislation since, failed to take into account is the massive evidence provided by black communities, by academics and by committees of inquiry, of the impact the education system was having on black people at all ages and stages of our lives. The activities, relentless efforts and insights of those of us who built the black education movement in Britain ever since the early 1960s have been roundly ignored.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the crisis in schooling and education in Britain is seen to be exemplified by the persistent levels of under-achievement among specific black communities, African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi particularly, and the excessive number of black school students (African-Caribbean boys in particular) excluded from primary and secondary school year on year.

Even as the crisis unfolded, black communities built a strong and dedicated voluntary education sector to support black learners of all ages. This was done particularly through the establishment of black supplementary schools, mother-tongue classes, provision for excluded black students and support for school leavers and adults returning to study.

The crucial abiding issue, however, was the quality of the experience black learners continued to have in mainstream schooling, in adult education and in Further and Higher Education. What was common to all those sectors, though notably less so in adult education, was a lack of acknowledgement of the fact that the schooling and education system marginalised black people, our history, culture and the contribution we were making to changing the face of Britain socially, economically and culturally.

The rhetoric of equal opportunities (and now of social inclusion), the twists and turns of the changing currents of multicultural, intercultural and anti-racist education, and the debate about widening participation have done very little to confront the fundamental issues facing black people in education.

Principal among those is what managers and teachers, the majority of whom are white and products of a system that has never seen black people as part of "mainstream" society, actually do in respect of the black individuals and communities they serve. Even now, there are no mechanisms by which they are made accountable for that, despite the ostensible concern about these trends which the society seems incapable of reversing.

This good practice guide focuses upon the population most affected by the 'normal' workings of providers of learning opportunities for black adult learners and on what those institutions and their staff need to do in order to put an end to the experience that black people have had of that system for the last half century.

Colour blind reminds the education establishment that, as the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry concluded, institutional racism is not the preserve of the (Metropolitan) police and that it is leaders and managers who must take the responsibility for ensuring that it is eradicated from within their institutions. The guide focuses upon the myriad ways in which black adult learners are marginalised even within institutions that genuinely believe they are doing a wonderful job in providing for their learning community overall.

It points to the fact that by the time adult learners access post-16 provision, many would have had negative experiences of schooling and/or of employment after school. The guide gives due emphasis to the responsibility placed on the post-16 sector to be truly responsive to people's needs (including the need to be skilled for jobs available in the labour market), and to take their experiences into account in planning provision for them.

The outer coating of 'Equal Opportunities', which too often shrouds the real state of things inside the workings of the organisation, is stripped bare, and managers, staff and students are given concrete suggestions as to how to grow an equality culture and transform the taken-for-granted 'consensus' within the organisation.

In the post-Stephen Lawrence Inquiry era and in light of the Human Rights Act 2000, the Race Relations Act 2000 (1976 Amended) and the duty placed upon all public bodies and employers to uphold people's human rights and to promote race equality, no education provider, from day nursery to university, could afford not to study this Guide and apply its recommendations as to good practice.

Professor Gus John
(Visiting Professor of Education & Former
Director of Education and Leisure Services.)

Introduction

Who this guide is for

This good practice guide is intended to enable practitioners and managers to enhance the strategic preparation of teachers, trainers, counsellors and other workers in the educational field.

The guide is particularly important to the following groups working with black and minority ethnic adults:

- teachers, lecturers, managers and support staff who want to develop their understanding of teaching black adults
- those who want to be sure of meeting individual learning needs with appropriate and culturally-sensitive teaching and learning strategies
- policy makers who want to develop their knowledge and understanding and who want to inform their practice in developing strategic plans
- experienced staff trainers in any learning organisation
- external consultants working in colleges, universities, community learning organisations and other settings.

Readers who want to change their practice to be more inclusive of black and minority ethnic learners and who are committed to increasing the demand for learning, raising standards and achievements of black and minority ethnic adults will find some of the answers in this guide.

The purpose of this publication

This publication provides a resource, handbook and reference in the fields of social discrimination and management. It will initiate debate, focus participants, and establish a framework for innovation and clarification.

Social discrimination is a central issue for education and employment. It is often confused with ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and gender barriers within society. The truth is that each of these barriers requires its own solutions.

This publication addresses economic, educational and cultural goals or expectations, and some signposts are given for the development of an integrated and worthwhile social infrastructure.

The inadequate experience of an increasing number of marginalised groups in learning and participating in mainstream society is a central focus. Remedial action is rooted in effective planning and one of the main concerns of the guide is to provide a basis for re-examining key prejudicial issues both in attitudes and cultural mind-sets.

A range of issues related to widening participation in post-16 education for black and minority ethnic adults is addressed in an informative and structured context. We acknowledge the importance of widening participation and note that black learners' experiences of education (past and present) play a significant role in their decision to participate, or not, in further and higher education.

Critical analysis of current practice and experience is central to the task of devising methodologies of delivery, monitoring and assessment. The guide underpins this activity with resources and strategies that individuals and groups can employ to formulate more powerful and specific programmes to assist the induction of target groups into a stakeholder framework. It is this ownership of role and function that forms the bedrock of effective action for groups whose heritage is one of alienation, insecurity and the necessity to adopt defence mechanisms in their relationships that negate their potential in both education and work.

While it is not possible to provide a blueprint that would be successful in every situation, the experience of learners, learning providers and practitioners reviewed in the guide suggests that strategies for widening participation for black people is more effective when a variety of approaches is employed. The selection of appropriate materials is a prerequisite for positive interaction. This is dependent on a clear identification of needs.

It is recommended that before implementing programmes, an investigation of the implications be undertaken. Examples of questionnaires and surveys are explained in the guide but these are not intended to be prescriptive. Some evaluation of the material is also necessary and a match made with some of the approaches detailed below. The lists are not exhaustive, not least because issues change over time and within local areas.

Approaches

- Knowing the learner and his/her social context.
- Understanding cultural, religious and other needs, and the implications of these for development and learning.
- Auditing subject matter and programme content for diversity and appropriateness to individual learners.
- Adopting perspectives that facilitate black adults being able to develop an inclusive value system that is robust and centred on learning.
- Reflection and examination by practitioners and facilitators of the assumptions, rationale and policy implications of delivery methodologies.
- Using curriculum design to form learning materials which challenge cultural, social, academic and personal values.

In the guide emphasis is placed on working *with* black learners. Strategies for targeted programmes may be more effective if appropriate managerial skills are available. Practitioners, managers, support staff and others must be involved in developing positive strategies and approaches to work with black adult learners, and there must be a move away from stereotyping black learners and treating them as a homogeneous group.

Effective pre-induction, review of course materials and delivery methods, formulation of evaluative techniques and assessment methods are important factors in successful delivery.

Current practice is briefly described in the guide. Interviews of students, staff, support workers, and ancillaries can provide pointers to topics informing appropriate materials development.

An institution's staff handbook is a key tool in the dissemination and communication of terms of reference for broad policy and procedural guidance. This needs to be related clearly to statutory requirements and regularly updated. It should also provide a resource for staff and curriculum leaders in selecting suitable approaches.

This guide aims to help the reader to identify strategies and approaches that are effective in practical work with black and minority ethnic groups. However, practitioners should realise that to achieve this aim, some organisations may have to change their culture radically. This process needs careful management to deal with the effects of long-standing problems of assimilation and ill-matched cultural parameters.

Consequently some sections of the practitioner and management workforce may require considerable support in what could be a major re-evaluation of long-standing beliefs and practices. This support is hinted at in the guide but it should be noted that many different agencies will have an input. It is critical for developments to be monitored and modified when required. The guide acts as a catalyst to help organisations to begin to assess their current practice in widening participation for and extending opportunities to black and minority ethnic adults and to develop effective strategies for implementation.

How to make the best use of this pack

The guide includes a number of model checklists and task sheets. They can be employed in their present form or adapted to meet a perceived need. A formal layout is recommended, facilitating tabulation of results and feedback. This method allows for anonymous input if required and can be used to develop a statistical account of current practice as a launch pad for planned initiatives. It is recommended that an evaluative dimension is included in information-gathering exercises at significant points They are designed as templates to trigger and initiate new ideas, skills and practices associated with establishing relevant and appropriate provision that meets the needs of people from black and minority ethnic communities. Although the learning will be most effective in a team or group setting, all of the materials can be adapted and used by individuals.

To use the materials effectively a starting point should be determined, based on the perceived needs of the team, group or audience. Depending on the situation it may be necessary to develop a baseline starting point and a strategy which allows alternatives to emerge. After an introduction some information collection and agenda construction can be a useful team-building activity.

A clear set of potential outcomes should be shared with the group at an early stage. These will depend on the profile of the group and the individuals within it as revealed in the diagnostic session. The presentation of a scenario about which group members can be expected to respond in a variety of ways can form the context of a 'group identity', which will foster objectivity and compromise.

Because the materials in the pack are designed to meet a wide range of needs, each person's starting point will be different. The overlaps and potential conflicts of these starting points should inform the agenda, and tactical activities focussed on drawing some of these areas to the centre stage should be sought. For group members to own the results of the session it is good practice to arrange a 'meeting of minds' where compromises in attitudes, roles and rules of engagement are overtly discussed and adopted in the context of a neutral 'advisory' standpoint. A feedback template or criterion-referenced response form is an effective way of gauging progress.

A plenary session to present and evaluate outcomes and methodologies is a valuable experience in team action. Alternatively, a summing-up of ground covered and positions reached can be garnered from the material encountered and a judicious selection of authoritative statements from the guide or other sources. A suitable collection of practical materials should be provided for group members in a format that suggests adaptation and development of the material for personal use.

In the event that groups are too heterogeneous to allow them to co-operate as outlined above you may prefer a 'match and mix' approach. In this case the facilitator will need to articulate clearly aims and goals that coincide with the mission and policy statements of the organisation. The implicit aim is still the identification and servicing of the needs of specific individuals within certain groups by removing or neutralising barriers to learning in the widest sense.

The guide is structured in such a way that you can set your own agenda for learning. The selection of materials for a specific context will be guided by the cultural environment in that locality. It will be possible to formulate approaches that not only follow best practice but also coincide with the aspirations of a range of client groups.

The first section in the guide, on social and economic issues, will inform your thinking around the inequalities faced by black and minority ethnic people in general. Other sections are specifically related to effective strategies for reaching, teaching black and minority ethnic adults and developing an attractive curriculum that matches and fits their needs.

The guide is designed to be used flexibly in a range of settings. It attempts to encourage practitioners, managers and support staff to develop programmes that 'match and fit' the needs of black adult learners as well as the needs of learners more generally.

There is no suggested timetable for the use of the guide or any particular element of it. The users themselves will determine the pace.

The guide does not try to promote the development of separate curricula for black and minority ethnic adult learners. On the contrary, it encourages practitioners, managers and support staff to consider:

- who their students are
- the rights of black and minority ethnic learners to equal access to provision and services
- the rights of black and minority ethnic learners to access culturally-sensitive programmes
- the rights of black and minority ethnic learners to personal language and learning support which is both culturally relevant and sensitive
- black and minority ethnic learners' need for an institutional ethos and learning experience which respects and reflects their own cultural and religious orientation as well as that of others
- the rights of black and minority ethnic learners to expect high quality teaching and to high achievements in learning.

In essence, the guide is about black and minority ethnic learners' needs and how meeting such needs can encourage more and different people from black and minority ethnic communities to participate in learning. The guide will give start-up help to organisations new to working with black and minority ethnic adults and give support for building on existing practice to organisations who have gone some way to meeting their needs.

The guide builds on a growing body of experience and expertise that now exists in a range of learning organisations in the delivery of education and training and in their work with black and minority ethnic adult learners. It will be a source of information for those who work directly with black and minority ethnic learners as well as those seeking to develop and implement anti-racist policies.

Black and minority ethnic adults are not a homogeneous group: they have wide-ranging and diverse needs and the issues surrounding this group of learners preclude the development of a definitive and prescriptive toolkit.

The guide highlights and celebrates good practice in adult education and describes innovative practice in meeting the diverse needs of black and minority ethnic adult learners. It is intended that the guide will help practitioners to be curious about other people's cultures and way of life, with a view to increasing their understanding and knowledge of the contributions that black and minority ethnic learners can and do make to the economy of this country. It is hoped that it will help people to be more accepting of, and to have respect for, diversity and difference; and that it can bring about changes in teachers' practice, attitudes and behaviour and in their approaches to management of curriculum, delivery of teaching and learning and strategic planning in relation to black and minority ethnic adult learners.

How this pack was developed

This pack was built on a survey of experienced educationalists active in the development and progression of black and minority ethnic practitioners, backed by visits and tested on a range of audiences.

In September 1999, over 40 learning providers in colleges, universities, voluntary and community education were invited to participate in sharing and developing good practice in working with black adult learners. They were asked to participate in a survey of their work with this client group and to identify good practice in specific areas of their work.

A number of organisations contributed evidence of good practice by submitting materials, policies and documents related to their claim of good practice and the guide draws on some experiences extracted from this information. The criteria for inclusion were evidence of:

- development in improving access for black adult learners
- development of strategies for informing and recruiting black adult learners
- development of effective strategies in supporting black adult learners
- development of materials and resources that reflect the make up of the local population (including black adults)
- partnership working and learning – with black community organisations
- consultation strategies for engaging black communities and identifying their needs
- development and implementation of equal opportunities/anti-racist policies

- effective staff development for working with black learners
- other innovative ways of meeting the needs of black learners.

Workers were asked to complete a questionnaire about their practices with black learners and to get them signed off by their organisations before returning them. In total, 25 organisations returned their questionnaire along with other relevant information about their programmes and progress. A small number of organisations was visited and a further sample was interviewed by phone about their responses. A learners' forum was run, to which learners were invited from a sample of the organisations included in the project to share their views on the qualities of a good organisation and what makes a good teacher.

The learners gave evidence on their experiences of learning, compulsory schooling and post-16 education. Learners were asked to share their experiences and views on a range of prescribed topics, including:

- information, advice and guidance
- barriers to access
- positive and negative learning experiences
- good practice in teaching and learning
- support for learning
- issues and problems
- curriculum content
- achievement
- staying or leaving the course.

A cautionary tale

This is the story of a little boy named Theo who woke up one morning and asked his mother, Mom, what if there were no black people in the world?

Well his mother thought about that for a moment, and then said 'Son, follow me round today and let's just see what it would be like if there were no black people in the world.' Mom said, 'Now go get dressed and we will get started.' Theo ran to his room to put on his clothes and shoes.

His mother took one look at him and said, 'Theo, where are your shoes, and those clothes are all wrinkled son, I must iron them.' But when she reached for the ironing board it was no longer there. You see, Sara Boone, a black woman, invented the ironing board and Jan E. Matzelinger, a black man, invented the shoe lasting machine.

'Oh well,' she said, 'please go and do something with your hair.' Theo ran in his room to comb his hair, but the comb was not there. You see, Walter Sammons, a black man, invented the comb. Theo decided to just brush his hair, but the brush was gone. You see, Lydia O Newman, a black female, invented the brush. Well this was a sight, no shoes, wrinkled clothes, hair a mess, even Mom's hair, without the hair care inventions of Madam C J Walker. Well, you get the picture.

Mom told Theo, 'Let's do our chores around the house and then take a trip to the grocery store.' Theo's job was to sweep the floor. He swept and swept and swept. When he reached for the dust pan, it was not there. You see Lloyd P Ray, a black man, invented the dust pan. So he swept his pile of dirt over in a corner and left it there. He then decided to mop the floor, but the mop was gone. You see, Thomas W Stewart, a black man invented the mop. Theo yelled to his mom, 'Mom, I am not having any luck.' 'Well son' she said, 'let me finish washing these clothes and we will prepare a list for the grocery store.' When the wash finished she went to put the clothes in the dryer but it was not there. You see, George T Samon, a black man, invented the clothes dryer.

Mom asked Theo to get a pencil and some paper to prepare the list for the market. So Theo ran for the paper and pencil but noticed that the pencil lead was broken. Well he was out of luck because John Love, a black man, invented the pencil sharpener. Mom reached for a pen, but it was not there because William Purvis, a black man, invented the fountain pen. As a matter of fact, Lee Burridge invented the type-writing machine, and W.A. Lovette the advanced printing press.

Theo and his mother decided to head out to market. Well, when Theo opened the door he noticed the grass was as high as he was tall. You see, the lawn mower was invented by John Burr, a black man. they made their way over to the car, and found that it just would not go. You see, Richard Spikes, a black man, invented the automatic gear shift and Joseph Gammel invented the supercharge system for internal combustion engines. They noticed that a few cars that were moving were running into each other and having wrecks because there were no traffic lights. You see, Garrett A Morgan, a black man invented the traffic lights.

Well, it was getting late, so they walked to the market, got their groceries and returned home. Just when they were about to put away the milk, eggs and butter, they noticed the refrigerator was gone. You see John Standard, a black man, invented the refrigerator. So they left the food on the counter. By this time, Theo noticed he was getting mighty cold. Mom went to turn up the heat, and what do you know? Alice Parker, a black woman, invented the heating furnace. Even in the summer time they would have been out of luck because Fredrick Jones, a black man, invented the air conditioner.

It was almost time for Theo's father to arrive home. He usually takes the bus. But there was no bus, because its precursor was the electric trolley invented by another black man, Elbert R Robinson. He usually takes the elevator from his office on the 20th floor, but there was no elevator because Alexander Miles, a black man, invented the elevator.

He usually dropped off the office mail at a near by mail box, but it was no longer there because Philip Downing, a black man, invented the letter drop mailbox and William Barry invented the post marking and cancelling machine.

Theo and his mother sat at the kitchen table with their head in their hands. When the father arrived he asked, 'why are you sitting in the dark?' Why? because Lewis Howard Latimer, a black man, invented the filament within the light bulb. Theo quickly learned what it would be like if there were no black people in the world. Not to mention if they were sick and needed blood. Charles Drew a black scientist, found a way to preserve, which led to starting the world's first blood bank. And what if a family member had to have heart surgery? This would not have been possible without Daniel Hale Williams, a black doctor, who performed the first open heart surgery.

So if you ever wonder, like Theo, where we would be without black people, it's pretty plain to see. We would still be in the dark.

If you gained any insight from this please pass it on so that others may know.

What is meant by "colour blindness"?

The notion of 'colour blindness' can easily be misunderstood and it is necessary, therefore, to say immediately what it is not, as well as what it is.

A 'colour blind' organisation takes a rigid line in treating everyone in the same way, regardless of what the particular circumstances of the individuals or groups may be. Such an approach is often equated with providing equal treatment. However, a colour blind approach that focuses on treating all groups identically or uniformly, regardless of their needs, almost guarantees discrimination because people are different in their character, needs, experiences and aspirations.

> A colour blind approach may well constitute indirect discrimination under the Race Relations Act

The term 'black' used in this guide is an inclusive term used to define African, African-Caribbean, Asian, Chinese, dual heritage and other people from minority ethnic communities who experience racism and share common histories and struggles in the fight against racism. The focus on black adult learners in this guide is not intended to draw attention to African/African-Caribbean/Asian learners only. Instead it is used as a generic term throughout the guide to refer to those who are identifiably different to the ethnic majority because of race, colour, ethnic origin, language, religion or culture.

This guide celebrates good practice, challenges bad practice and provides practical tools for people working in education and training to develop successful and effective anti-racist practice. This is not the first NIACE publication on race equality and education. NIACE published a range of publications during its early period of activity in this area of work, including:

Educational Guidance with Black Communities: A Checklist of Good Practice, S Dadzie, 1990

Survey of Accreditation Needs of Black Adult Learners with Overseas Professional Qualifications, S Dadzie, 1992

Essential Skills for Race Equality Trainers, S Dadzie and A Forbes, 1992

Older and Wiser, A Study of Educational Provision for Black and Minority Ethnic Elders, S Dadzie, 1992

Adult Education in Multi-Ethnic Europe – A Handbook for Organisational Change, S Dadzie, European Commission/NIACE/IIZ-DVV Bonn, 1998

All of these publications have served to support a range of practitioners and learners in their work and study over the years.

Looking back at the successes and setbacks of the last decade, it is evident to all education providers who know of NIACE's work that despite the many successes, there remains much to do. Developing this good practice guide is a further step in addressing issues in education and training in relation to black adult learners.

Social and economic issues

Britain is a multi-cultural nation with some 6.6 million people from ethnic minorities. It is a society rich in diversity; but for those from a minority, life rich in quality and/or equality is far from a reality.

Black and minority ethnic communities live mainly in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Glasgow and Cardiff as well as in Nottingham, Leicester and Bristol. However, while the 1991 Census confirmed this picture, it also showed that there were some black and minority ethnic people in all except one local authority district in England and Wales. The Census showed that these communities were present in rural areas as well as urban. They were also present in the majority of Scottish authorities.

Black and minority ethnic communities are concentrated in some areas. For example, Bangladeshis are present in larger numbers in Tower Hamlets, and Indians are present in higher numbers in Leicester and Barnet while African-Caribbean people are present in higher numbers in Lambeth and in parts of Birmingham. (Butt and Box, 1999)

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (*Framework Version for Consultation*) in Minority Ethnic Exclusion Annex B outlines that:

- black and minority ethnic people make up 6% of the working age population in Great Britain but over half of them live in 29 local authorities, all of which are among the 44 most deprived areas in the country.
- the 44 most deprived areas in the country contain four times as many people from minority ethnic groups as other areas
- over 80% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households have incomes that are less than half the national average, compared to 28% of white people
- 13% of minority ethnic people of working age were unemployed in 1998, compared to less than 6% of white people
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi people are one and half times more likely to suffer ill-health than white people, and African-Caribbean people a third more likely.
- 15% of minority ethnic households live in overcrowded conditions compared with 2% of white households

The same publication goes on to say that 'minority ethnic people experience all of the problems that affect other people in deprived neighbourhoods, like changes in the jobs available and failures in Government policies and public services.' But these problems are made worse by direct and indirect racial discrimination and by inadequate recognition and understanding of the complexities of minority ethnic groups. Hence services fail to fit their circumstances.

In Spring 1997 545,000 (25%) of men and women of working age from non-white ethnic groups in Britain were receiving education and training in schools, colleges and universities and through other courses, compared with an average of 15% of the working age population as a whole.

In the same year 81% of 16-19-year-olds from minority ethnic groups were receiving education and training (71% full-time) and 42% of 20-24-year-olds (29% full-time). Among white people, 67% of 16-19-year-olds and 27% of 20-24-year-olds were in education and training (27% and 17% respectively studying full-time). (*CRE Fact Sheet*, 1998)

Although some people from black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to be studying or training than their white counterparts, some groups are less likely to have formal qualifications. In 1997, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were least likely to have qualifications (46%), compared with around 18% of white people. In the 16-24 age group 24% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis had no qualifications compared with 10% of white people. Indian men of working age were most likely to have degrees – 23%, compared with 14% of white men. (CRE Fact Sheet, 1998)

Graduates from minority ethnic groups are less likely (37%) to have obtained an upper second or first class honours degree than white graduates (52%). (Pathak, March 2000)

Black 16-year-olds are more likely to take a vocational qualification than an academic route towards acquiring qualifications. In 1996, 40% of black 16-year-olds in full-time education in England and Wales were pursuing only vocational qualifications, 62% of them at further education (FE) colleges and 20% at state schools. Only 36% of white 16-year-olds studied at FE colleges.

Compulsory schooling

The 1998 *CRE Fact Sheet* shows that in 1995/1996 there were 6,333,628 people aged between five and 15 who were students in primary, secondary and special schools in England and of these 704,175 (11%) were from minority ethnic groups.

'The proportion of young people from minority ethnic groups achieving five or more GCSE higher (A–C) grades has increased since 1994. However significant differences between ethnic groups still remain. In 1996 38% of Asian and 23% of black people achieved this standard compared to 45% of white pupils.' ("One Year After the MacPherson Report", *TES*, February 2000)

Analysis of Local Education Authority early key stage results also indicates low attainment among Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils (HMSO 1999 Strand S). Although the two Asian groups tend to improve their performance through secondary school, pupils from all three minority ethnic backgrounds tend to improve significantly less than other groups. (HMSO, 1999)

More recent figures show that only 29% of black teenagers passed five GCSE grade exams at C grade or above, compared with 47% of white teenagers, 53% of Indians and 61% of South Asians. (*CRE Fact Sheet*, 1998)

Towards an inclusive strategy

Since the last OFSTED review of research on the achievements of black and minority ethnic pupils, several studies have added to the attempt identify school- and LEA-based strategies for raising minority attainment. Certain factors repeatedly emerged as significant, including:

- strong leadership on equal opportunities and social justice (from the LEA and the head teacher in particular)
- seeking and using parent perspectives
- designing and enacting clear procedures for recording and acting on racist incidents
- generating and sustaining an ethos that is open and vigilant, which enables pupils to discuss 'race' issues and share concerns
- developing and communicating high expectations accompanied by a clear view that under-performance by any group is not to be equated with 'failure'
- reviewing curricular and pastoral approaches to ensure their sensitivity and appropriateness
- using ethnic monitoring as a routine and rigorous part of the school's/LEA's self evaluation and management.

'In the context of an inclusive educational agenda that seeks to raise standards for all, this evidence indicates a need for clarity and guidance in translating the commitment to equality and inclusion (so often expressed at the national level) into policy proposals at the local/school level.' (*Educational Inequality*, Gillborn and Mirza, 2000)

Competent and committed organisations know and are aware of the make-up of their local community and their needs. This information and knowledge helps learning providers, their staff and governors to plan the services to be provided and to fund the resources needed. It also helps managers to identify the appropriate staffing and skills needed to work with different community groups. It helps managers and practitioners to monitor and review whether learners they are working with include all those who need and want to join in learning activities.

Black and minority ethnic adult learners

The development of education for black adult learners has progressed in an *ad hoc* fashion. Opportunities and access to quality learning have been patchy in terms of curriculum breadth and the quality and quantity of provision available.

Opportunities for black adults to determine and structure their own learning are rare. It is common for black learners to encounter a number of obstacles and barriers, leading to segregated learning opportunities where choices are few. Learning programmes are often developed and implemented without regard to the needs and aspirations of black learners, their requirements or views, and based on a deficit model.

Imbalance between ethnic groups participating in learning

A survey of participation in learning by ethnic groups (Sargant, 1993) showed that although one in three adults (32%) was engaged in current or recent study, 60% of the African group were studying currently compared to 20% of the Pakistani group. Other trends revealed by the study were:

- more African and Chinese women currently studying than men;
- slightly more men than women from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent currently studying;

- a higher proportion of women learning than men across all groups;
- many respondents studying full-time as their main activity (21% of Africans and 10% of Chinese)
- high proportions from the African, Chinese and Indian communities staying on in education post-18 (the proportions from Pakistan, the Caribbean and Bangladesh were much lower).

The survey found clear evidence of significant need and demand for the provision of accessible English language teaching, but that a pre-requisite was to make knowledge of those opportunities available to the different groups. It also offered strong evidence of unmet demand for appropriate learning opportunities, a demand which could be met by education providers engaging in more careful, strategic planning.

Former Education and Employment Minister Malcolm Wicks urged universities to step up their efforts to engage learners from black and other minorities in learning activities. Speaking at the Post-16 Conference (November 1999) 'Learning Through Diversity', he said:

'In many ways ethnic minorities are succeeding in higher education. Entry rates are high and the number of well qualified graduates from ethnic backgrounds is increasing.'

Robin Landman, Chair of the Black Managers Network, reminded delegates at the same conference that 12% of further education students are black and that colleges rely on black students for their business survival (*TES*, 3 December 1999).

However, there is still a disproportionate number of black and other minority adults not participating in mainstream learning activities. Universities and colleges have to do much more to reach black and other minority adults unaccustomed to learning. They need to ensure that their recruitment and assessment procedures are fair and equitable. Measures have to be taken to widen participation in further and higher education by targeting black and other minority ethnic communities and by tackling racism within educational institutions.

The evidence is that large sections of the black and minority ethnic population in the UK do not engage voluntarily in any form of learning after school. However, staying on in full-time education after compulsory schooling is more common among Indian, African and African-Caribbean groups (over 85%) than white young people (76%) There is a range of reasons given by adults for not participating; a key one being exclusion from education pre-16. Young black men, for example, are disproportionately likely to be excluded from school.

The particularly negative school experience of some Caribbean boys appears to be an important element in their academic under-achievement. Moreover, different peer and teacher influences may increase Caribbean boys' resistance to school, leading more to serious disciplinary responses such as exclusion. Once excluded, the majority are unlikely to return to mainstream education, so disadvantaging them further. (Parsons, 1996)

Another group identified as massively under-represented is Bangladeshi women. Some ethnic groups are participating at higher levels than expected, indeed, rather higher than average. For example, men of African origin in further and higher education programmes (Sargant, 1992). The education system as a whole does not fully address the issues of diversity in participation.

There are some areas of concern surrounding the education of black and minority ethnic adults that the education system does not address, notably:

- the high rate of exclusion of African-Caribbean young people. The exclusion rate for this group is up to seven times higher than for their white counterparts. We need to explore and agree strategies for reducing the exclusion rates for this group, removing barriers to learning and education and offering a wider range of learning activities and programmes which sufficiently meet their identified needs.
- the need to increase recruitment of teachers and managers from black and minority ethnic communities. The absence of these staff from educational institutions is of great concern.

Black and minority ethnic adults are discriminated against at every level, from the dole queue to the board room. The problems start with recruitment. According to a recent Labour Research Survey, the overwhelming majority (87%) of employers advertise jobs internally or in local papers. Often the two are combined: 'This meant that areas where the local population was predominantly white offered little opportunities for employment'. A significantly smaller percentage (59%) used job centres, which is a far more likely source for many black people to find jobs. A quarter of employers used head-hunters and recruitment consultants, which also compounds black people's exclusion. 'Since consultants often target and directly approach potential recruits, relying on networking and other information sources, it is likely that potential black applicants will be missed.' Meanwhile only a small proportion used the minority ethnic press when looking for staff. Not surprisingly, then, black and Asian workers are disproportionately disadvantaged when it comes to getting jobs.

Organisations serious about engaging with new and different adult learners need to become more flexible in terms of what they offer and where and when it is delivered. Learning may have to be extended out of traditional learning institutions and into local community settings and delivered at times that suit people's lifestyle and circumstances, for example, modules/ credit accumulation in further and adult education and in the workplace.

In an attempt to break down barriers and begin to respect and value black people's skills, experience and expertise, organisations must recognise that black people have, over many decades, played a critical role in creating and sustaining Britain's wealth and continue to make vital contributions to the country's political, spiritual, cultural and economic well-being. It is important for this to be acknowledged through curriculum development, planning, practice and delivery.

In order to address inequalities, service providers – and in this particular instance learning providers – should build on the good work being done already and develop an action plan aimed at addressing disadvantage in education of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. It is important that people from minority ethnic communities are more involved in the design, delivery and planning of education and services related to education. Last, but not least, learning providers should ensure that their staff and personnel are well aware of the social, cultural, economic and educational needs of these groups.

There are enormous benefits to the organisation and to the learners in addressing the needs of black adult learners and in listening to, involving and collaborating with them about educational services. If we continue to be colour blind and to ignore black communities and their needs, attracting and retaining them in education will continue to be a struggle.

The scale of the challenge

As society has developed more complex and ambivalent forms of induction and assimilation for groups of aspirant citizens, the difficulties of access and progress have resulted in a growing problem of alienation and under-achievement. In the UK, changes in educational philosophy and terms of reference in the last 30 years have led to a marginalisation of significant numbers of learners. Despite considerable improvement in the structure and availability of post-16 education in recent years there are still barriers in the system. There is still effectively a hierarchy in adult education that places a premium on A level and undergraduate pathways. Access through unconventional routes and by means of part-time or day and block release methods, which is the avenue for most members of the groups affected by the 'colour blind' proposals, is still seen as the least preferred way into the system by employers and policy-makers. Nevertheless the general skill levels of 16-19-year-olds are being raised consistently. Many of the anomalies of fragmented, overly vocationally-biased training opportunities are steadily, if slowly, being subsumed into a unified and externally moderated open access structure, with transferable standards being introduced along the lines of the Open University and Open Colleges.

This work continues as Government develops strategies for the management of a sophisticated workforce with high expectations of standards of living and welfare provision. Despite the efforts of many post-16 practitioners a large task still remains. The roots of the problem lie in the class-based and divisive methods of secondary education in the post-war period. The reform of this selective structure is an on-going process in which the complications of ethnicity, gender and religious differences have not yet figured to any significant extent. Much of the framework of syllabus construction and assessment criteria still displays exclusive and value-laden parameters in cultural, linguistic and political terms that condition and compromise effectiveness for the groups under discussion. The organisation of further and higher education is still modelled largely on a view of society that is homogeneous, whereas multi-culturalism and the existence of mutually-exclusive value systems and success criteria side by side in the same communities have been facts of life for decades.

The coincidence of poverty levels, dysfunctional family units and adoption of defiant or rejectionist attitudes in black and minority ethnic groups is significant. The consequence is that in the eyes of state agencies they become a 'problem' in the same category as a white under-class of poor achievers.

To disentangle the pressures among ethnic groups and kinship communities requires a clear vision of origins, allegiances and frameworks of domestic power relations to be articulated, not by the state but by practitioners. Compromise is difficult for those who feel threatened by symbols of vested interests. Developing confidence, awareness and focussed participation for individuals conditioned by their experience is a major hurdle and concern for practitioners and their mentors who are working hard to raise standards among adult learners. However, this task is particularly challenging in institutions with large populations of students of black and minority ethnic origin. Organisations who have smaller populations of black and minority ethnic students face an even bigger challenge.

It is common knowledge that the further education sector attracts a higher proportion of learners from black and minority ethnic groups (12%) than exists in the overall population (6%). However, while some learners from black and minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well in education and training, research pre-16 and post-16 show that others are consistently under-achieving.

> 'For many years Bangladeshi pupils were seen as suffering some of the most pronounced educational disadvantages in the country. As a relatively recently settled group, often with comparatively low levels of English language fluency, in the 1980s Bangladeshi pupils were seen as the lowest attaining of the principal minority ethnic groups.
>
> The previous OFSTED review in this field challenged the rigidity of this view by showing that the 1990s had witnessed a dramatic improvement in the relative attainments of Bangladeshi children in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (where around one in four of the country's Bangladeshi children are educated).
>
> Bangladeshi pupils were attaining higher average exam scores than their white peers as early as 1991. Data from the Youth Cohort Study also suggest that Bangladeshi attainments have improved substantially in recent years. The Minority ethnic Achievement Grants (EMAG) data show that these improvements have not been limited to Tower Hamlets. Indeed, 21 EMAG submissions (26 per cent of those monitoring GCSEs by ethnic origin) showed Bangladeshi pupils as more likely to attain five higher grade passes…Bangladeshi attainments still lag behind white averages nationally, but at the local level there are many cases where this pattern is challenged.'
>
> (*Educational Inequality*, Gillborn and Mirza, 2000)

Britain is now a multi-cultural/multi-ethnic society rich in diversity, much of which is concentrated in a small number of mainly urban areas. The story of the 20th Century was one of immigration and movement, both voluntary and involuntary. Boundaries have changed, empires have ended and human and natural disasters have impelled migration. As a consequence natural populations have diversified.

Britain's cultural mix is now far broader than it was 50 years ago. Colleges, universities and providers of education in the community and voluntary sectors have a vital role to play in presenting an inclusive vision of society. There is a need to begin to challenge stereotypes and racism with more vigour. Learning providers have to make greater efforts to extend learning opportunities and widen participation for black and minority ethnic adults.

Responding adequately and positively to racial equality and cultural diversity should not be superficial, cosmetic or short-term and it should not be patronising. It means:

- institutional commitment – writing a focus of cultural diversity into the organisation's mission statement and developing action plans to make it happen
- ensuring greater achievement and progression for black and minority ethnic learners
- ensuring sensitive and understanding approaches to cultural and religious needs
- building meaningful and effective relationships with black people and communities
- ensuring that funding for cultural diversity and race equality is part of the organisation's core budget
- ensuring that the organisation's policies on cultural diversity and race equality are explained to staff
- ensuring that individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds are represented at every level of the organisation's management, governing boards, support and teaching staff
- employing individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds in non-culturally-specific posts.

It seems odd in the new millennium to be still writing about the need for a recognition of cultural diversity and racial equality. However, these issues remain with us. The report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (published February 1999) brought home the imperative for urgent action to tackle the persistent and damaging nature of institutional racism.

Responding to cultural diversity is a mutual learning process. It involves the creation of working links with new learners, a process of mutual familiarisation, a readiness to accept that those new links must have an impact on practice and policy. The result is a learning organisation which demonstrates its relevance to black and minority ethnic communities.

After the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council, educational institutions will be judged by how well they meet the needs and aspirations of individual learners.

> **'I expect the Council to build equality of opportunity into all its policies, programmes and actions'**
>
> **(LSC Remit Letter, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, November 2000)**

It will be critical that learning providers are able to combat the disadvantage that some learners and potential learners face. Black people have experienced direct and indirect barriers to learning as a result of their race and have been excluded from learning. Learning providers will be expected to build equality of opportunity into all their policies, programmes and actions and to draw on existing good practice.

Combatting racist and discriminatory practices is a challenge for education providers at all levels. Learning providers have the potential to remove the barriers to access to education and training for black people. However, to do this, they must first accept that the institution is often the barrier preventing people from black and minority ethnic groups from engaging in learning.

Institutional racism has to be tackled 'head on'. Research has consistently demonstrated that children can be racially prejudiced from the age of three onwards, but has been less successful in showing how schools can address this problem. Teachers often tackle the issue indirectly by encouraging young children to recognise and value cultural differences through the use of a range of multi-cultural teaching materials.

This is a starting point but can sometimes be superficial, merely papering over the cracks. Education providers and their staff have to look carefully at their awareness and understanding of equality issues as individuals and as professionals. It is important that they explore curriculum issues and use their findings to plan and develop a curriculum that is not solely Eurocentric. It is a concern that professionals responsible for securing improvement in widening participation and access to education for people from black and minority ethnic groups have poor understanding about equality of opportunity and related issues.

However, although primary concern is about managers, governors and teachers, there are equal concerns about providers, funders and inspectors of learning. There should be an extensive training programme for those who will be making judgements and setting targets. Not only should relevant staff be trained but they should also have to demonstrate as part of an appraisal process their understanding and commitment to equality of opportunity.

There is also a need to look at how institutional and individual negative attitudes, stereotypes and behaviour towards black people affect their achievement and progression. Professionals must accept that racism alone does not scar learners. It is also a lack of acknowledgement of the history of oppression of black and minority ethnic young people by educators, other influential and powerful people that contributes to their under-achievement as adults. (Adapted from *Marginalised Voices*, UACE 1999)

Parekh (1998) outlines five areas of concern about racial inequality in the field of education:

- the high rate of exclusion of African-Caribbean children from schools
- the need to increase the recruitment of teachers from black and minority ethnic groups
- inspection reports which ask inspectors to be attentive to 'undue variation in achievement by racial groups'
- the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority which talks about core values that take little account of Britain's multicultural character
- while there have been recent improvements, the educational achievement of African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi children is still depressingly low.

Despite the fact that equal opportunities and anti-racist issues have been on the agenda since the 1960s, there is still a lot to be done. Black communities argue that the Government, researchers, other professionals and education providers have been writing about them for far too long, with too little action. There are many challenges that learning providers have to address but the scale of these challenges has to be evaluated and reviewed in order for organisations to begin to act in a strategic way to overcome the problems. For too long these issues have been 'bolted on' to other agendas. This cannot continue: learning providers have to see the issue of equality as integral to their work.

The present Government appears to be addressing these issues across post-16 education and has for the first time charged public bodies with promoting equal opportunities both internally, through its personnel policies, and externally, by embedding equal opportunities in all its policies, programmes and actions. Its vision is to create 'a learning society in which everyone has the opportunity to go as far as their talents and efforts will take them'. (*LSC Remit Letter*, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, November 2000)

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has ambitious objectives to make learning more inclusive, to widen participation, stamp out unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all learners. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity for the sector to engage with those who are not currently participating in learning and to adopt a more learner-centred approach.

McGivney (1990) argues that non-participation is an indictment not of public apathy but of an education system which still projects a narrow and elitist image. People working in education tend to regard non-participation as the 'problem', rather than exploring how the system itself has failed to be relevant and attractive to large sections of the adult population.

If learning providers are to widen participation for black adults then they have to rise to the challenges outlined here and begin to look in more depth at the reason for their non-participation in learning.

The challenge for these organisations is to look not solely at social exclusion or the broader social processes that affect under-achievement of black adults, but also at the processes, systems and discriminatory practices in operation within their organisations that in effect constitute institutional racism.

Parekh (1998) argues that 'racism is too important, stark and deep-seated a feature of our collective life to be subsumed under other forms of exclusion, or tackled indirectly. It should be explicitly acknowledged and built into all our policies as a distinct matter of public concern.'

Challenging institutional racism

'The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report has given us the opportunity to make changes. It is incumbent on us all to seize the chance before it is too late.' (John Monks, TUC General Secretary) The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1998, Home Office) states that racism, institutional or otherwise, is not confined to the police service. It makes reference to the need for others to address the problem and presents a challenge to organisations to examine their policies and the outcomes of their practices to guard against disadvantaging any section of our community. The Report goes on to say that, 'Given the central nature of the issue we feel that it is important at once to state our conclusion that institutional racism exists both in the Metropolitan service and in other institutions nation-wide'.

Regrettably the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report does not underpin its discussion and exploration of the notion of institutional racism with an explicit analysis of what constitutes racism of this kind. However, it is relatively straightforward to identify a number of specific factors which together add up to a picture that is recognisable.

Examples would be:

- stereotyping
- "colour blindness"
- setting of low targets for achievements in respect of work with black and minority ethnic groups
- low outcomes in terms of making service delivery more accessible to black and minority ethnic groups
- devoting proportionately inadequate resources to the needs of black and minority ethnic groups
- funding programmes for black and minority ethnic groups from short-term funding schemes rather than mainstream resources
- patronising words or actions
- unfamiliarity with the culture and traditions of black and minority ethnic communities
- narrow consultation practices that do not collect views of black communities
- inappropriate information, such as information in inaccessible languages or in English only for readers of other languages
- devaluing religion and culture
- high levels of grievance/disciplinary procedures involving black and minority ethnic employees
- displacing or substituting other issues as the reason for not addressing racist practice.

It is possible, of course, to add to this list but drawing up a checklist is not enough. There is a need for public institutions to restructure and re-think their relationships with black and minority ethnic communities if they are to eliminate institutional racism. One result of this will be improved learning opportunities for black and minority ethnic adults.

Many learning providers believe that if they develop equal opportunity policies they have met the challenge. Not so: converting policy into practice is not always the end result of such policy development. Many organisations visited and surveyed in this project had developed equal opportunities policies but not implementation plans or mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating them. There is a real need for organisations to look at what it is they are saying, on the one hand, and agreeing with staff and managers on the other.

One influential, powerful education body had developed policies around equality of opportunity but in its practices was discriminatory and exclusive. It had established an advisory group for education and in the selection process had approached well-known key people to sit on the advisory group. This immediately excluded people who are disabled, from black and minority ethnic communities and women. In discussion with the manager from this organisation, it was evident that he had not thought about the recruitment and selection process or the mix of the advisory group. He had done what we all do so well: worked within the confines of our selective networks. If we continue to be inward-looking we will continue to talk and write about the challenges but fail to meet them.

In the light of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report learning providers need to ask themselves some fundamental questions about their practice:

- how do we support our staff to understand and meet the needs of different black and minority ethnic adults?
- do our learning facilities, learning resources and student services meet the needs of different black and minority ethnic adults?
- are we sure that the learners from different black and minority ethnic communities in our organisations are achieving equally high outcomes as their white counterparts?
- have we achieved a rich mix of people from culturally diverse communities on our governing bodies, committees and teaching staff?

It is important that learning providers challenge their existing practices, to recognise where black and minority ethnic adult learners are disadvantaged and to take action to redress inequality. To make appropriate changes to policies and practices, learning providers need to avoid a 'colour blind' approach by thinking through the consequences that their action or inaction can have on black and minority ethnic adult learners.

Examples of good practice

- A further education college recently conducted a staff audit to identify the skills of existing staff. They used the results to develop curriculum teams in different subject areas. Staff who were found to have skills that were required in some areas were seconded to those areas for 12 months. Having served their secondment they have been able to choose to stay with that department or return to their original section. The result has been that staff of black and minority ethnic origin have had opportunities to move into

contd.

roles and positions that would not have otherwise been available to them. This approach has offered opportunities for on-the-job staff development and training and has given all the staff involved new skills. There are benefits for the organisation, the learners and the individual staff. It is not always as simple as this but if we do not try we will not know.

- A voluntary organisation in London has looked carefully at its operational practices. It employs 500 staff and over half of the staff are of black and minority ethnic origin. However, three-quarters of this cohort have jobs at very low levels with the remaining number holding jobs at junior and middle management positions. The organisation took the decision to establish a secondment scheme two years ago where they would second black and minority ethnic staff into senior management positions within the organisation and move low level staff into junior management positions. There was, of course, a process of selection to these positions. This gave applicants interview practice and built confidence. As a direct result of this approach many staff have had the confidence and skills to apply for permanent jobs within the organisation and externally. It has raised the profile of staff who prior to this were 'invisible' and has helped the organisation to see the benefits of real diversity within the workplace.

- A Trust has been successful in securing funding from the National Lottery to run a leadership programme for staff of black and minority ethnic origin. The money will fund 20 staff at junior level to train as managers across the organisation. The programme will run for 12 months and will include interview and job search skills as well as secondment for short periods into management roles. At the end of the programme participants will be able to act as 'bank managers' during managers' absence and sickness. They will all receive an increment in salary for completing the course and going onto the management register.

- A local voluntary organisation in the Northwest has set up a training course to train black and minority ethnic parents as teachers and support workers. It is working in partnership with the local education authority to promote and run the programme. The project was established because the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the voluntary organisation worked together to identify shortages within local school of both teachers and support staff of black and minority ethnic origin. The LEA has agreed to interview all successful parents for jobs as teachers in local schools when vacancies arise. Parents will have to apply through the system but if they are from the programme they are guaranteed an interview.

- An institution in Liverpool runs courses that meet the needs of black and minority ethnic women. It has secured Social Regeneration Budget Objective One money to run health courses for women whose first language is not English and puts on course in areas where black and minority ethnic people generally are under-represented such as science and engineering. The principal of the institution is a black woman and a high proportion of the staff working there are ex-students who have a thorough understanding of women's issues.

The structures and systems are in place to enable a significant advance in supporting black and minority ethnic people to access learning opportunities in the mainstream. The Government has demonstrated its commitment in terms of legislation and reorganisation of the sector. All that remains is for education providers to identify the challenges, explore the options and take action.

Checklist

Use the checklist below to begin to identify the challenges and explore the solutions for engaging different groups of people from black and minority ethnic origin people in your local community. Think about the inequalities and institutional practices that act as barriers to access and inclusion in your organisation and discuss how to begin to change your approach.

Identify from the list below the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within your institution in relation to planning for and meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic learners.

- *senior managers leading on, and implementing/monitoring equal opportunities and race-equality policies*
- *strategic planning on elements of the enrolment/recruitment process such as marketing strategy, recruitment strategies, staff recruitment targets (black staff)*
- *accessibility of the place for teaching and learning*
- *supporting learners (language, culture, religion, learning, counselling, and so on)*
- *communication and consultation with black communities*
- *systematic continuing professional development of staff (related to working more effectively with black learners)*
- *review and development of resources and materials to eliminate racial bias*
- *working in partnership with local black organisations*
- *curriculum planning, design, and delivery – utilising human and material resources that reflect the make-up of the population of the community.*

All of the approaches are valuable to senior managers, practitioners, support staff and others working with learners from black communities.

Effective strategies for reaching black and minority ethnic learners

Not Just A Statistic

Remembering
Blair's 1997 education speech
All about the three R's
I asked myself
Why
Why did I want to return to
An education system that failed me
Education for me was not
the 3 R is reading, writing, arithmetic but more like the 3 F's
FAILURE, FRUSTRATION AND TO FORGET
I knew that there was going to be yet another Struggle
as I had always spelt writing with a W
and as for arithmetic
Well ask Mr Blair.
A return to a system that never
understood my needs demands
or fed my hunger
a return to a system
that left me starving.
My hunger was for
Blake, Zephaniah, & Nichols
Not Football, Running
Or other things "sporty".
Now my voice is heard
Time has not been Wasted.
The land mass in my mind
has but been cultivated
Time was needed
The right time.
I am no longer a nomad lost in
the realms of education.

Now I'm in the right place.

Hear my voice.

By Richard Huje (black adult returner)
November 2000

Many people from black and minority ethnic groups do not traditionally participate in learning because they feel let down by the education system. They have almost certainly not gained full benefit from learning in the past, and are unlikely to return to learning in later life.

'A consistent message of NIACE annual surveys is that people who have had recent experience of learning expect to undertake further study in the near future, while those who say they have done no learning since school see almost no likelihood of future participation'. (Aldridge and Tuckett, 2001).

It is important that when you manage to 'hook' them back into learning that you do not make assumptions about them, about what they want or need. A critical success factor for retaining 'hard-to-reach' learners is to listen to what they have to say, what it is they want to learn, and how they want to learn it. 'Hard-to-reach' does not mean 'finds it hard to learn'. They may simply need to learn in a different way from the traditional methodology. It is important to consider different learning styles.

Accept that you may not be offering what they want; you may need to help learners to draw up a 'shopping list' of learning in order for the offer to be appropriate to their needs. It is also important to recognise that as providers you do not always have the resources or capacity to deliver everything that learners want. It may be necessary to work in partnership with other organisations and groups who are experienced in working with black and minority ethnic adults, to add value to what you currently offer.

Do not jump to conclusions about learning abilities based on conventional criteria. You could be talking to a person with tremendous potential who simply is not good at writing things down – including filling in the form you gave them. Explore what learners already know and try to give credit to and value their prior learning experiences and achievements.

Examples of good practice

Reaching hard-to-reach learners: an example from Tower Hamlets Lifelong Learning Service

Tower Hamlets is a culturally diverse and rich community with over one-third of people from a black or minority ethnic background.

It was with this in mind that there were cultural themes to events for Adult Learners' Week 2001. There was a strong emphasis on Chinese and African culture on the launch day, Saturday 12 May. There was African and Chinese dance, food and dress. The day was also organised in partnership with the Chinese Association who brought along stalls, provided food and helped with organising performances. The target group was reached through contact with the organisation which successfully brought the group members together.

Another successful way of reaching learners was the demonstration of African dance and drumming by the tutor of the class and his students. The use of informal learning methods and encouragement of cultural enhancement were keys to success in this case as they helped to promote the message of learning being fun, exciting and open to all cultures.

Monday 14 May was focussed on promoting the arts to Asian communities. Again, the emphasis was on learning being fun and accessible to all, regardless of age, race, gender or ability. There was a number of workshops (including IT and Asian drums) and performances and presenta-

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tions by both white and Asian artists. The presentation in the morning by a local Bengali artist included a talk on her life as a young female Asian artist trying to make her way into a profession as a painter. There was also the possibility to drop-in to the Art Foundation Class.

One of the most important aspects of Asian Day were the stalls with advice and guidance on careers, courses, support on local housing, and information on business loans. Exhibits ranged from Alcohol East to London Guildhall University, Teacher Resource Centre, Account3, Micro-credit and others. The reason providing such advice and guidance to black and minority ethnic communities is imperative is that often education is the last thing on their minds. They may require advice and guidance on local issues that concern them such as housing, business loans, problems with alcohol abuse or whatever the case may be. By providing such support and guidance the local provider also opens the door for them on other possibilities such as a short literacy course or IT workshop. It also provides the opportunity for non-participant groups to discover the facilities that are available to them, such as childcare, language support or general advice and guidance.

Strategies for reaching and teaching non-participants: breaking the barriers in Keighley

With funding from the Adult and Community Learning Fund and other sources, and in partnership with a range of other organisations, Keighley Healthy Living Network has been targeting certain under-represented groups with the aims of social inclusion and equality of access to opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged residents. Keighley is a varied and ethnically mixed town, some nine miles from Bradford Metropolitan area and exhibiting many of the issues prevalent in inner city areas. Two wards are in the lowest decile nationally on socio-economic and health indices and have a substantial and strongly fundamentalist Muslim community, with low levels of literacy in either English or mother tongue.

Outlined below are some of the key issues which have contributed to success in accessing and retaining new learners into informal provision. As we have only been in operation for nine months and our partnerships relatively new, these only represent short-term findings. The target groups where these methodologies have been applied include: minority ethnic communities with little oracy who are not participating in any formal educational provision; high/low rise estates that are predominantly UK British with high numbers of young single mothers experiencing difficult socio-economic situations and cycles of deprivation; mentally ill / recovering mentally ill Asian women. It is not an area of particularly high unemployment as there is still some 'traditional' small manufacturing industry and warehousing but employment tends to be insecure and largely low-paid and unskilled.

The key factors in bringing new learners into opportunities for progression and more active community participation seem to be:

- **Partnerships:** drawing a range of voluntary, community and statutory organisations in as partners, particularly organisations who have not seen 'education' as traditionally being part of their role. Such partners are seeing the potential positive effects in their interest areas of engaging people in education. We have worked with Health Centres to bring medically-at-risk adults into light physical activity and improving diets through involvement in organic growing teaching sessions on our community allotments. Not all delivery partners at the first stage level need to be traditional education providers although they may require support and expertise from traditional providers. Working with learners with little English or with mental health problems using a South Asian cre-

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ative arts organisation as outreach partners and facilitators, some participants have moved on to ESOL groups set up in the same venue as well as gaining in terms of health and well-being.

- **Cultural acceptability** of venues and content and community accessibility – the people in the target group do not see themselves as College attendees and may not be permitted to attend groups outside of the area if they are not acceptable to their community.
- Engaging and empowering **community champions / mentors / role models.** For example training community volunteer mentors for the first step At Home in Keighley scheme to attract new learners whilst building confidence in spoken English and accessing services. Using and developing community outreach workers who are powerful advocates and recruiting agents, e.g. Asian Learning Support Mentors in schools, can be important.
- **Low-key approach** – definitely education by the back door e.g. dance exercise group that improves English through activity. Very few of the participants would have come into an advertised English class or a formally taught exercise programme.
- **Building confidence** before attempting to move people on – small 'step' horizontal, rather than vertical, progression and acceptance that people have different learning needs at different stages of their lives. Some, particularly those with mental health problems, might even need to 'repeat' a course at a time when they will achieve something different out of it. Many are lost in progression from a supported, local and student centred group when the next step is into a mainstream, accredited course at an education centre.
- **Quality of tutors.** Tutors / facilitators need to be responsive, flexible and able to think on their feet and build good group dynamics and a high degree of peer group support without fostering tutor dependency. High quality tutors / facilitators may be untrained and 'non-traditional' but have the right skills of approach and can relate to the group. They are worth supporting through mentoring and co-teaching as they can again be central to success with hard-to-reach groups.
- **Allow plenty of time for outreach work and negotiation** with the potential learners as to the type of provision they want. Non-participant groups often have strong views, but no-one ever asks them. Equally they often appreciate 'taster' sessions that provide a broader menu to select from and open up possibilities. This also allows time to build trust and confidence and can easily take up to three months of work with one discrete group. This needs to be seen as an essential part of widening participation and funded accordingly.
- As old as the proverbial hills (that do surround Keighley), but it works – **bringing in parents through schools**; finding out what your children are learning in school (e.g. Life Education Bus parents pilot project in Keighley); or computing for mums at the new City Learning Centre at Greenhead High Schools. Excellent responses to both, particularly when we employed an 'open session' with lunch at which course content was informally negotiated and agreed before sessions began. Strong and active support, commitment and involvement from the school staff at all levels is essential if the approach is to work.

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- Again, stating the obvious but often overlooked, the need for content must be perceived as **having relevance to needs** at the time. It is important not to under-estimate the time that high quality development work can take.
- There is also a need to allow plenty of time to develop confidence and for training tutors in a whole range of subject areas to deliver aspects of personal power, stress reduction, communication skills and so on.

There is always a need to make allowances for some degree of irregularity in attendance with this type of target group – it can seem an insoluble problem, particularly with Asian women and their family commitments. Trying to develop some type of contract for 'time for you' may mean additional contracted hours for staff and use of other support workers such as School Nurses and Home School Liaison workers. Developing innovative skills of recap and peer/paired support in the group (pairing of students) can prove a powerful means of keeping poor attenders on track. We are also experimenting with using our volunteer mentors to support their new learners as they move into a community group.

Jill Kibble
Keighley Healthy Living Network – Action For Health

The ILIM Project (Asian Women's Mentoring Project) Bradford

In Urdu, ILIM means 'knowledge' and that is why Westbourne School selected this name for their successful Adult and Community Learning Fund education project for Asian women.

The project is based at Westbourne primary school and was set up in March 1999, following local survey evidence that demonstrates that many Asian women (some who had lived in the UK for lengthy periods and others who had recently arrived) are not taking full advantage of local learning opportunities.

The project aims specifically to reach these women by training Asian women in the community to become volunteer community mentors. They would in turn inform local Asian women about the learning opportunities available and support them to access provision.

During 1999 15 women from the Asian community took part in intensive mentor training. They learned the skills of mentoring and about local education provision, how to access it, who delivers it and where it was delivered. Alongside this they were able to build up a portfolio of work to provide evidence of their learning. They are soon to receive Open College Certificates to mark their achievement.

The project has had a marked effect on the lives of the women trained in the first mentoring programme. The women feel that the project has:

- Improved their confidence generally and in their parenting skills particularly
- Revitalised their interest in learning
- Given them inspiration and raised their aspirations in getting involved in learning at different levels
- Raised their awareness of what learning opportunities are available to them in their local community

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- Enabled them to use their newly learned skills to help others
- Made them feel valued
- Raised their awareness of the community they live in.

Critical success factors of the project include

- Effective partnership with the Community and Continuing Education Service and others including Westbourne School
- Establishment of a successful crèche staffed by Asian crèche workers
- Proactive and effective publicity: using learners from Asian communities to recruit other Asian women has helped the project to recruit non-traditional learners and to generate a waiting list for the next programme
- Successful and effective media coverage of the project and its achievements - several articles in local papers (including Asian press) and publicity on the local Asian radio station
- Effective links with the school
- Student interest and motivation due to high quality staff/ staff of Asian origin
- Effective mentors – successful in brining new learners to classes
- Excellent team work
- Detailed planning
- Slow, careful approach
- Listening carefully to learners and responding to needs

The project is particularly successful and continues to make relevant changes to the programme as a direct result of review and learners' comments. The programme is immensely popular and has a good learner retention rate. The project mentors and learners are soon to host an event for a project in Wales to share knowledge, skills, experience and good practice.

Black and minority ethnic adults are not a "special group" – they are usually just people who have been 'switched off' by past learning experiences and don't think they fancy what is on offer. This can mean one of many things but we focus here on just three:

1. ***information*** about learning has not reached them effectively. This is a marketing issue – telling people accurately what you're offering, putting it over in a way which appeals to them, and also mentioning the things (dietary requirements, women-only courses, support for language) which are crucial enablers to their taking part in learning.
2. ***perception*** that education and learning is out of their reach (not for them). Researching learning needs of the black and minority ethnic population is important, but so is thinking creatively about how to offer the learning you know you are good at delivering in a different context, and which learners can relate to as something useful to them –something they are interested in, or something they want to do.

3. *poor experience* of pre-16 and adult mainstream learning. They might dislike classroom learning situations because they associate them with bad school experiences, curriculum content that bears no relevance to their culture or daily lives; they might have gone on training courses which didn't deliver useful learning activities or provide evidence of learning either by certification or acknowledging personal progress and achievement. In the light of this knowledge, potential learners have to feel that learning is a good personal experience and can be fun.

Although education providers like to use the term 'difficult' or 'hard-to-reach' learners, they are often talking about their own inability to encourage black and minority people to participate. Resistance or indifference to provision that learners see as alienating or irrelevant is often an extension of their negative experience of full-time education in school or college. Many black and minority ethnic people see adult education provision and the structures supporting it as traditional, alienating and old fashioned. This is true of both young people and adults of black and minority ethnic origin. Given the fact that there is national concern about the rate of exclusion of young black males and that many young people who are permanently excluded never return to school, this is one category of 'difficult' learner for whom radical ways of organising learning opportunities need to be found.

Such young people and other potential adult learners engage in learning or in teaching of some sort every day of their lives. That is as true of young people in an amusement arcade as it is of their fathers sitting around in a social club playing dominoes and dreaming of winning the next regional or national championship. The challenge for the adult education sector is how to entice and employ the right people to plan provision with such groups, having regard to their interests, their needs and their circumstances.

Examples of good practice

Reaching hard-to-reach black and minority ethnic learners: a case study from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Leisure and Education Department

Inter-agency and intra-community networking is at the heart of reaching hard-to-reach learners. Valuing lifestyles means taking information on opportunities into communities using first language through people who have insight into potential learner anxieties and needs and are able to respond swiftly in a meaningful context. Learning is offered in local schools, voluntary agencies (e.g. an inter-faith project; Bangladeshi Advice Centre; Pakistani Youth Association and African-Caribbean Project) and at centres within Oldham's main black and minority ethnic communities. There should always be options to learn in locations other than local ones for those who choose to do so. Men with long-term unemployment and with basic skills needs are the hardest to reach, yet we have learners who are deeply committed to progressing once the initial hurdles of introductions, language, clarification of opportunities and other support systems are surmounted.

Refugees' and asylum seekers' needs are recognised by our service and we have established regular sessions, some with ICT and all with childcare, which are central, as these people often walk miles to learn. Those who do not arrive via the corporate agreement with Central Government, but via private agency landlords, receive little support. Health, immigration advice and child care/schools information are priority needs and there is no co-ordinating local forum to meet these needs. We understand this is a policy "not to make things too easy for them". However, we have forged links with agencies who have a will to support, such as the Minority

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Ethnic Schools Service outreach worker, Early Years team and private agencies active in the Manchester area in order to reach adults, and we move on from there. Word-of-mouth is beginning to play a role in reaching other potential learners among newly-arrived people.

The positive inter-agency team-work underpinned by Government resourcing to meet the humanitarian needs of Kosovo Albanian families who settled in the town has died a death. Those families remaining now have seriously reduced circumstances and a reduced support network. One young woman, who had been in the second year of a languages degree at Pristina University when war intervened on her life, continues to study and is applying for Classroom Assistant posts, as access to HE requires three years' residency to qualify for any financial support and she is aiming at teacher training. A young man recently arrived from Sri Lanka attends classes regularly and we have been able to link him with a small community of Buddhist monks who are also learners with us. This has alleviated his loneliness and isolation and helps to maintain his motivation and self-esteem in the difficult early months of his time in Oldham. I wish we could develop a central support system for these people, but all networks seem to be sporadic. The will of agencies involved to work together is not strong, nor is there any high profile leadership or guidance. Refugee Action has recommended direct links with the CAB or with Immigration Advice at the Home Office and we use these routes.

Links with Employment Services and with Adult Careers Guidance networks are invaluable in reaching long-term unemployed black and minority ethnic people. Job Search courses are taught with ICT and language support. Self-presentation and interview techniques could be developed within all courses across the curriculum. One young man has recently been appointed to a Community Development post with young people, funded by Greater Manchester police and steered by a local voluntary agency. His work with young people is much valued and respected.

Open Links, a basic skills project working within the Probation Service, is our main link with ex-offenders. Only one person has been supported back into his community which is a reflection of the needs within the Probation Service to address the needs of black and minority ethnic people re-building their lives. There is currently a recruitment drive locally for black and minority ethnic people to train in probation work, and some of our staff recently attended an information day on this.

A youth worker links offer a collaborative approach accessible to young people where learning can take place in informal settings often built around a group project. New Start and Youth Offending teams are new partnerships for us and we are responding to a growing number of requests for teachers and support workers. One such group is embarking on writing a newsletter, in conjunction with a local secondary school, Youth Service and ourselves.

Curriculum issues

Involvement of black and minority ethnic learners in the development of the curriculum is essential. We have been able to respond to the request for first language classes and are currently seeking to respond to requests for learning around health and fitness. Some black and minority ethnic women have suggested that ante-natal information in the community would be helpful and we are seeking links with local Sure Start programme on this.

The marginalisation of the learner from the black and minority ethnic community within a particular curriculum area has to be discouraged. We have actively to work towards open access to the whole curriculum, with the appropriate support mechanisms. There might always be a

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case for discrete and skills-linked provision for beginners, but this should never mean anyone is held back from progression inside or outside the service.

Oldham's black and minority ethnic communities are clearly segregated. Each locality needs access to a meaningful curriculum locally and we have tried to put this into place with limited resources. The finance does not match the needs at the moment. Already, with 2001/2 programme going to press and staffed, further requests are coming in from schools for discrete provision. It is good that programmes like Family Literacy generate this interest in learning, but we must have the funding to respond at an appropriate level of delivery. This is crucial in this time of heightened racial tension, when black people are feeling afraid and besieged in their communities and the young people of this town are demonstrating their despair through violence.

The learner needs to be put at the centre of the curriculum concept with a real avenue for her/his voice to be heard. We need to devise a black and minority ethnic people's forum which will encourage this participation and this might have to be in several parts of the town, with provision of childcare, in secure locations.

Adult and Community Learning should see itself as part of a greater whole and work for the black and minority ethnic learner to have fair and equitable opportunities to progress into employment or into Further or Higher Education. The Advice and guidance networks must include the black and minority ethnic persons' perspective and help to elasticate the boundaries of the white academic institutions of FE and HE.

The black and minority ethnic learner deserves to have access to high quality learning opportunities and the most appropriate resources we can provide. These need to be up-to-date and to exercise the new skills and knowledge requirements of the 21st century. Sound financial investment in the development of resources will hopefully be a component of staff/learner development in the near future.

If we expect ownership of learning, this can only be truly achieved if the learner feels valued and the support offered is enabling and progressive. Childcare and learning support are issues affecting the marginalisation of learners through the curriculum. Nobody should be turned away because she/he has a young child with her/him. Nobody should be turned away because her/his child is disabled and requires one-to-one attention in a crèche. Sadly, this is still the case.

The single-minded focus of managers on the generation of money for Oldham's statutory and voluntary agencies must also focus on the removal of barriers to recruitment and selection in employment. We need local opportunities for training teachers, probation workers and to investigate the black and minority ethnic perspective in agencies like the police and fire service. Within the curriculum, we need to make sure we offer black and minority ethnic learners the chance to voice concerns, to articulate these positively in a public context and to find the way through interview situations successfully.

An innovative process to deliver learning

Luton, a medium-sized city, is situated 38 miles north of central London. It has a population of over 181,000 and is reckoned to be the most diverse urban area in south-east England, outside London. Some statisticians are of the opinion that it is perhaps the sixth most diverse community in the whole of the British Isles.

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Considering Luton's cosmopolitan character, Grassroots, an education programme, five years ago launched a process of developing community relations between various cultural and faith groups in Luton. A key strategy was to set apart a worker with a special focus on learning methods to 'reach the unreachable' in the community. One of the unreachable scenes in the community has been the gulf between various cultural and faith groups. The worker, with several community leaders who volunteered their time, met for several months. In 1997 they developed an Interfaith Forum, introducing innovative learning programmes such as Evenings of Learning at various places of worship, Annual Pilgrimages, and a Training Module on cultural competence. In July 2000, after three years of local community practice, the Forum evolved into a Council of Faiths.

What it has introduced at this point within the Borough is a path for estranged communities to converse with each other. It has created space for a Hindu and a Christian to collect funds after the Jumma prayers at the Central Mosque premises, and a Muslim to appeal to the Sikhs at a Gurdwara for the victims of the earthquake disaster in Gujarat. People are learning to acknowledge cultural and religious differences and are beginning to understand these differences while acknowledging the potential to strengthen as well as destroy what they have built with these encounters and conversations. It is a difficult and slow process, clearly indicating that learning through engagement is vital.

The Council of Faiths has proved to be a viable community resource. Its role is one of enabling each community to contribute fully to the growth of the whole. It has developed a unique learning programme. A good example was the recent visit of the Westminster Interfaith group with over 150 Interfaith Pilgrims to Luton, making their way through the streets between a Mosque and a Gurdwara. It was a public witness and a learning event which many classroom lessons and lectures on community relations may not be able capture. Building confidence and capacity to reach out has increased.

Experience indicates that these communities have begun to appreciate their own potential, to welcome those who are different, portray them with dignity and communicate professionally on matters of public interest.

It is a big step beyond mere construction of places of worship or community centres, engaging in a larger discourse of building a community of communities, creating a culture appropriate for the new generation of people.

Shanthi Hettiarachchi

Catering for the learning needs of refugees and asylum seekers

Refugees and asylum seekers are a very important part of the learning community and are having to access learning provision against a background of stereotyping, bigotry and xenophobia generated by the media and by politicians.

Adult learning providers are seeking to cater for their learning needs in that same context, having regard to particular tendencies within society. For example:

- the assumption that all or most asylum claims are 'bogus'
- the assumption that refugees are in fact economic migrants looking for a better life

- the tendency to assume that all refugees and asylum seekers are poor and illiterate
- the assumption that by virtue of being speakers of languages other than English they are necessarily of lower intelligence
- the assumption that their skill levels and their educational attainment in their home countries would be of a lower order than one would expect from a cross-section of British learners of comparable age
- that everyone carrying the label 'immigrant', 'asylum seeker' or 'refugee' is potentially or actually a drain on the resources of the state and its institutions
- that, therefore, one should not even contemplate making 'special' provision for 'them'.

For all of the above reasons, the assessment of the levels of educational attainment, of skills and of prior experiential learning that the disparate body of refugees and asylum seekers have is a hit and miss affair. Even in boroughs with large and settled refugee communities, there is little evidence of planned and systematic assessment across the various phases of education.

Consequently, schools, colleges and other training providers rarely have a practice of seeking to assess the learning and skills development needs of the entire family and then referring individuals to other providers or agencies that could best cater for their needs. Given that the Government is operating a dispersal policy and directing refugees to specific local authorities across the country, local and/or regional assessment centres are even more necessary.

In the absence of such centres, learning providers should have in place arrangements for carrying out assessments in a manner that allows for the identification of the circumstances and needs of refugee and asylum seekers. Only thus can an organisation develop creative solutions to the challenges it faces in seeking to give asylum seekers and refugees their educational entitlement.

Such arrangements might include:

- meetings in small groups (aided by an interpreter, as necessary)
- individual assessment followed by guidance about appropriate areas of study or work
- a frank discussion about racist bullying, harassment and discrimination and a statement of the organisation's policy and practice in dealing with them
- where possible (and appropriate) engaging settled refugee communities in dialogue and mentoring or networking arrangements with the group of learners
- exploring ways in which learners who are refugees and asylum seekers could influence and support the organisation and delivery of curriculum
- liaising with schools in order to discuss their arrangements for school-aged children and whatever 'family learning' or community education provision they are making or could make
- liaising with other partners or providers in respect of the needs and circumstances of those being assessed
- reviewing the organisation's practice and policies in the light of the results of such assessment

- provision for trauma counselling where appropriate
- specialist advice and guidance regarding education, training and employment

Checklist

If the organisation is serious about recruiting more black adult learners it is important that it has in place:

- *written guidance on recruitment and fair selection, equal opportunities and anti-racist policies*
- *admissions procedures that identify whether or not discrimination is taking place against certain black groups*
- *arrangements for welcoming and informing learners that are appropriate to the needs of black learners, and accessible to learners of all backgrounds. Information (where appropriate) should be available in languages other than English*
- *careers advice and education for black learners that are not dictated by stereotyped assumptions*
- *organisational policies and processes that deal with under-representation of black staff in senior and middle management roles and over-representation of black people in low-paid, low-level roles within the organisation*
- *knowledge of the major festivals celebrated by black communities, taking care not to allow important organisational activities to clash with them e.g. holding major examinations and assessments during Ramadan*
- *clear procedures for recording and dealing with racist bullying, harassment and discrimination. An organisation that is able to deal effectively with racist behaviour and language will be well placed to attract learners from black communities*
- *a language policy, including support for learners with English as an additional language.*

It is important that these are considered as integral to reaching black and minority ethnic people. They are tried and tested strategies that have been held up as critical success factors by organisations located in areas where there is a large black and minority ethnic population. They appear in this section because, although they are equal opportunities strategies, they are integral to the whole process of effective recruitment of black and minority ethnic learners and should not be 'bolted on'.

Community consultation

Adult education is very different from learning at school or sixth form college, the difference being that one is compulsory and the other is done by choice. At school, children are put in a classroom and told what they will learn, then tested on what they have learned. Some stick with the mainstream learning system happily and pass their exams. They are not, on the whole, the people we are addressing.

This is accepted as the only consistent way to educate school children, but it sets a series of artificial barriers to achievement, and turns out many young people who are 'relieved to be able to stop learning' when they leave school. This indicates that the system may be unsuited to a significant number of people who go through it. Some drop out of the system – by leaving school at the earliest legal opportunity, by truanting, by behaving so negatively they are excluded. There is no evidence that these young people had a lesser ability to learn than those who remained within the system.

If people leave – or want to leave – the school system in such numbers in their teenage years, adult educators have to make a distinctive policy of offering innovative, creative and different routes to learning.

The majority of black and minority adults who are, in today's society, regarded as 'hard-to-reach' have 'voted out' of (or were excluded from) the school system – not out of learning. This is not because the school system is bad, but because it does not always meet the needs of learner. There are few choices and little or no consultation on what you learn or how you learn, and it does not always take into account that people have different preferred styles of learning.

Active consultation and collaboration with black and minority ethnic communities allows professionals to identify what learners require.

The clear advantages of consultation include:

- provision of a more rounded picture of what black communities need and want;
- increasing black communities' sense of involvement and affording them opportunities to work in partnership;
- building good working relationships with local black communities, with clear expectations of rights and responsibilities;
- demonstrating the commitment and accountability of the learning organisation to equality of opportunity for learners; and
- raising the image and the profile of the learning organisation among the black communities.

Examples of good practice

Telephone survey

One organisation in the South of England carried out a telephone survey of black student leavers. The survey was designed to evaluate the learning experiences of the students whilst at the college. Included in the survey were students who left their courses early as well as those who completed them. Feedback from these learners was used to further develop provision and services that are culturally sensitive.

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Postal survey
A West Midlands organisation worked with the LEA to identify households of black families with post-16 adult learners and distributed questionnaires to every family inviting their views on what educational programmes and services they would like to see on offer.

Access to learning opportunities
A black community organisation and a local college in the Midlands have joined forces to identify and develop access to learning opportunities for black communities locally. They are working together to address the issues and barriers that either prevent or discourage black people from taking up learning opportunities. In partnership they are looking at personal, cultural, linguistic and institutional barriers and devising solutions to break these down.

It is important when looking at these examples to consider the following issues in relation to your provision and how you might adapt these ideas in your organisation, bearing in mind its culture and the make-up of the student population. Other factors will include issues and difficulties specific to your organisation, as well as effective ways of communicating what you intend to do, why and how the activity will be funded. There is also the need to evaluate the outcome and think in terms of:

- value for money
- impact on black and minority ethnic learners
- impact on the organisation
- impact on the black and minority ethnic communities locally.

It is equally important that high-quality learning opportunities are available to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic learners. In addition, it is crucial that colleges, universities and other learning providers are committed to combatting the racism, disadvantage and discrimination that black and minority ethnic people face. In doing this they need to build equality of opportunity into all their policies, programmes, actions and practices.

Community outreach work

'In its simplest sense of reaching out or taking services to groups and individuals, outreach is a method that has long been employed in a number of sectors – in youth and community work: in the pastoral missionary work of different religions (Woking Mosque for example, has run a 'Benefits Road show' for Pakistani families) in health work (for example, health visitors) and drug-related work; in community education and other public services (public libraries commonly take services to rural and isolated areas, hospitals and day care centres for the elderly, some work with schools and different community and groups and organisations). Outreach is also commonly used in an international development context (for example, in literacy and health interventions, 'barefoot doctors', and so on) although the actual word may not be used in that context.' (McGivney, 2000)

Outreach is a process by which an institution takes itself out into the community in order to identify and work with those who are under-represented within its client group. The purpose of outreach is to increase community participation by demonstrating a willingness to listen, adapt and be responsive to the needs of those who do not access traditional provision.

'For a raft of reasons that have been mulled over for years, many people, especially those in less affluent circumstances, shun organised forms of learning especially when they are delivered in dedicated centres and institutions. To attract such people involves a painstaking process of networking, face-to-face contacts, consultation and negotiation, leading to the development of learning programmes based on needs.' (Veronica McGivney, personal communication, April 2001)

Voluntary and community organisations involved with black and minority ethnic groups use outreach strategies and approaches as a tool to widen participation and combat exclusion in education for these groups. Black voluntary and community-based organisations involved in raising awareness of educational opportunities use outreach for a variety of reasons. These include:

- identifying new black and minority ethnic groups whose learning needs are not being met
- recruiting people who are under-represented in the service to new and existing provision
- taking services to black and minority ethnic people who will not or cannot access provision because of past negative experience of learning or their personal circumstances
- developing new types of educational delivery
- marketing as a tool to increase participation in existing provision
- helping people to determine their own learning needs by putting learners at the centre
- consultation and consensus, leading to joint planning of learning activities that are appropriate and relevant to their social, cultural and religious needs
- empowering people as stakeholders in their own communities.

Black and minority ethnic organisations and groups have significant experience of outreach strategies and approaches, taking services to the groups they serve. They employ staff of black and minority ethnic origin who have a thorough understanding and experience of dealing with equality issues and are also highly trained in their subject areas.

In a focus group discussion on outreach with black and minority ethnic learners, leaders and learners talked about some of the elements they considered to be the critical success factors in developing and implementing outreach strategies and approaches. These include:

- appointing people with the right attributes and blend of skills (e.g. personal characteristics, minority ethnic origin, good communication skills, understanding of black and minority ethnic community issues)
- the ability to empathise, observe, interact with and listen to local people
- ability and skills to contact and negotiate with a range of agencies, networks, groups and community gatekeepers
- locating and negotiating use of suitable premises that will be appropriate for the specific needs of some black and minority ethnic groups
- cultural sensitivity, respect for others and for host communities
- the ability to adopt approaches to meet the cultural and religious needs of new and different groups

- the ability to react to widely differing wants and needs
- the ability to identify and call on other sources of skill and expertise within the community.

As an instrument for widening participation and breaking down barriers of social exclusion in education, employment and training, outreach must be seen as a long-term investment. It should be viewed as part of the overall process of responding to black and minority ethnic adult learning requirements. It should be integral and complementary to, and have parity of esteem with, the mainstream work of statutory learning providers and should be used strategically as a tool for widening participation in adult and community learning. A key message here is that although it is desirable to recruit black and minority ethnic staff to be part of the outreach team, it is also equally important to ensure that the same staff are able to progress onto mainstream jobs. This is essential if we are to develop pathways into mainstream provision for black and minority ethnic learners. Within mainstream organisations, black and minority ethnic staff should be working at all levels, not just with black and minority ethnic students.

Many black communities are unlikely to have access to the same information about education as their white counterparts. They may lack confidence or knowledge of how to reach the institution, or they may simply perceive it as an unwelcoming or inappropriate learning environment. This is particularly true for refugees, asylum seekers and others who are socially, culturally or linguistically isolated, although it applies similarly to those who have been alienated by prior experiences of racism, neglect or marginalisation within the education system. (Dadzie, 1993)

Using an outreach worker can be vital if the development of provision for black and minority ethnic adults is to be successful. The aim of such posts is to enable the learning provider to have a presence within the community and to identify and work with those who are under-represented.

> Outreach for one project in inner city London happened on the quay, through regional TV, ethnic media, through Job Centres, drop-in centres and by word of mouth. Using other learners to talk about their learning experiences in their community is an excellent outreach strategy.

However, these workers are often marginalised from mainstream organisational work, training and professional development. Black outreach workers can be further marginalised and isolated from any mainstream services or provision. It is important that organisations employing outreach staff from black communities ensure that they build in mechanisms to enable them to link in with mainstream career development processes.

> One FE College in Oldham works closely with black and Asian outreach workers to ensure that they have access to staff development and training. Opportunities for secondment to mainstream provision is integral to their professional development and training.

It is also crucial that organisations do not use black outreach workers as "experts" on black issues, and the ones to whom all black issues are referred – rather than as an essential human resource alongside whom others can work and learn.

> In a community college in the South East black and Asian outreach workers reported that whenever there was a problem with any of the black or Asian learners teachers would refer the problem to them to deal with. They felt that they were seen as the 'experts' and that teachers did not think that it was their responsibility to deal with issues of black and Asian learners. The outreach workers said that they felt insulted and patronised as a result of the attitudes and actions of some teachers who persistently used them as 'experts'.

The Link Worker supports the learning provider in increasing community participation by demonstrating a commitment and willingness to listen, adapt and respond to the needs of black communities.

Planning and funding outreach provision can remove barriers to access such as financial constraints, inadequate childcare, lack of language and learning support, inappropriate timing or inflexible entry criteria. Outreach provision in familiar and culturally-appropriate local venues offers black and minority ethnic people a vital first step into education and training activities and encourages long-term participation and interest. The most successful outreach provision develops with, rather than for, the people it is intended to benefit. Involving communities in organising, planning and decision-making processes about education and training is more effective than offering what you feel they want.

Selecting the right staff to work as outreach workers is essential. They will need to have a non-traditional approach to teaching and learning. They will have to work in unconventional ways, and require an understanding, sensitivity and knowledge of the cultures, customs, language and needs of black and minority ethnic people. Managers have a specific role in ensuring that outreach workers are well supported in their work in the community.

> A community college in the North provides outreach worker support. Each support worker is paired with an experienced support worker who acts as their mentor. The college also has a supervision system where the mentor has access to supervision from a line manager about their role as mentor. Outreach support workers have found this type of support to be very helpful. They feel less isolated and have regular meetings about their work to discuss training, problems, processes and procedures and to seek advice and guidance.

The Link Worker's role here is to encourage people from black and minority ethnic communities to become involved in all aspects of curriculum planning and delivery. Employing and utilising a black Outreach Link Worker signals commitment to cultural understanding, patience and sensitivity, particularly if they are creative and enjoy the confidence of the various sectors of the community and are capable of building relationships within the targeted community.

Examples of good practice

- An Adult and Community Learning Fund-supported project (for Asian women) in Bradford has trained 15 Asian women to become outreach workers. The women work in the community. They aim to reach other Asian women who have just arrived in the country, or live in the UK but have little or no knowledge about educational provision. The women provide information in the mother tongue for the new recruits and encourage and support them in engaging with learning. The project has trained 30 women in this way and has encouraged more Asian women into learning.
- An Adult Education Service provides educational opportunities to all adult residents in the area. The adult learners with whom the service is working include all minority ethnic groups of the 1991 Census, as well as over 60 different nationalities. The Education Service provides for a large student body of asylum seekers/refugees in the South and East of the area and some in the North West of the area. The learning needs of students are identified through a community-wide consultation process. The Service has an information-sharing group made up of community leaders and professionals from education,

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health and social services. The group meets monthly to discuss the needs of learners from black and minority ethnic communities. There are two full-time outreach workers whose remit is to identify the educational needs of black and ethnic minorities living in North West Kent. They make referrals to appropriate public services. Provision is held in local community venues that are accessible and acceptable to black people from minority ethnic communities, such as the Muslim Centre. Managers have a crucial role in making the decisions about where provision is located. They often work with other managers and staff from neighbouring institutions to negotiate acceptable learning environments and to share or offset the costs of providing such specialist locations.

It is important that learning providers provide the Outreach Link Worker with managerial and material support in order that they can carry out effectively their roles in advocating on behalf of learners, empowering them to take responsibility for their own learning and to influence the manner in which provision is made.

- The problem of non-participation by some Asian women in an Adult and Community Learning Fund-supported project in Rotherham was overcome by focusing the curriculum content on prayer and the Koran. The programme used the medium of prayer to interest the learners. The starting point was their cultural interest and religious preference, then the learning activities were aimed at developing their confidence, competence and independence through other activities related to prayers, e.g. basic skills, communication and problem-solving. Utilising the local school to meet parents and deliver learning was central to the success of working with the Asian women's programme. Using a grassroots worker from the Asian community resulted in the recruitment of a good number of Asian women who are isolated from learning.

- Two months before term was due to start a local community college in Lambeth distributed leaflets about its programmes at the local Caribbean carnival. This initiative was the idea of the head of arts and drama as a result of poor enrolment on her courses in previous years. The enrolment for performing art increased by 50% and the college recruited new and different learners from black and Asian communities to a predominantly white programme.

- The Sports Participation And Cultural Equality (SPACE) project provides sports development training opportunities for people living in Yorkshire and Humberside and gives local young people the opportunity to develop their skills in a variety of sports. The project takes mobile facilities into the heart of the community, schools, youth clubs and community centres.

- A project in Huddersfield provides training for women in the use of the Internet. It is particularly aimed at women who face extra hurdles because of their age, race, disability or income and who have never used a computer. The project aims to build confidence as well as skills and provide opportunities in the local community to further training, education or employment.

As a first step in achieving good outreach provision, institutions need to get more involved with their local black and minority ethnic communities by working in partnership, seeking views and advice and consulting groups about their needs. Consultation with black and minority ethnic communities involves developing provision with an organisational ethos that is inclusive.

Some learning providers reach learners from black communities by working closely in partnership with local black community organisations, outreach workers and services. Taster provision offered by some learning providers is wide-ranging in content and, therefore, effective in attracting a range of black learners to local meetings and events. These events provide a forum for black communities to voice their opinions and allow organisations to listen to the views and needs of local people.

In Blackpool the LEA is working closely with local community leaders to provide learning opportunities for Muslim women and after-school provision for their children. Although it is the men who make the decisions about the type of provision the women need, the women are consulted about the content and the activities. It is important to get the women onto learning programmes identified by the community learners but it is equally important to ensure that the women have a say in how/what learning is delivered in the programme.

The credibility of teachers and other staff is key in developing outreach provision and in recruiting potential learners from black and minority ethnic communities. Discussions with local black groups about education and training issues uncover cultural issues, needs and traditions. Learning providers are able to offer support to meet specialist needs, encouraging the learners to participate.

Organisations need to be conscious of the real meaning of capacity-building and of the dangers of disenfranchising the communities they work with by presuming that they know best and acting and speaking on behalf of the communities. Institutions should, ideally, recognise that consultation is an important factor in developing provision and engaging and retaining black and minority ethnic learners. Seeking the communities' views, and working collaboratively with them in their communities and in real partnerships, will gain their trust and respect.

Informing the learners

Effective marketing and publicity in an adult education context involves a readiness to identify potential students, establish their educational needs, interests and aspirations, and the use of a variety of methods and media to convey information to them about available learning or training opportunities.

Communicating information about provision and services has traditionally involved organisations giving out written information to those who know where to enquire. This approach often assumes a literate client group that knows where to find the information, can 'de-code' educational jargon and has the confidence and a basic understanding of how to negotiate its way through the education system.

Such assumptions should not be made about potential learners, including people from black and minority communities, who may have been 'switched off by learning'. Literacy levels may be low, and verbal and interactive forms of communication are preferred or needed.

For all learners the availability of the right information, advice and guidance can be a crucial factor in their access to available learning opportunities. Learners from black and minority ethnic communities are not an exception. Information, advice and guidance mean providing facilities and processes to enable the learner to progress, to make informed decisions about their learning programme and career destinations, and to evaluate their experience of teaching and learning. Crucial elements in informing learners include:

- Starting from where learners are in their knowledge and development.
- Providing information about personal support i.e. prayer facilities, single-sex classes, language support, food and dietary requirements, childcare and travel expenses.
- Placing learners into an effective assessment and advice system with a positive experience at the first point of contact.
- Using outreach, festivals and events, Job Centres, word of mouth, Open Days, telephone contacts as ways to inform potential learners.
- Providing opportunities for potential learners to "Have a go": sampling opportunities are very effective and likely to lead to people joining in activities providing that the right people are involved.

Outreach checklist

Do you…

- know the composition of your local community? What evidence is there to support the need to target specific groups within the local black and minority ethnic community where your institution is situated?
- employ high quality outreach workers who are experienced, have an understanding of the religions, cultures and educational needs of black and minority ethnic young people and adults? Do they have knowledge of educational opportunities your institution or its partners can effectively support?
- plan and organise taster courses, classes, initial advice and guidance sessions in accessible venues and locations?
- Plan, organise and engineer provision which meets individual and group needs, where appropriate, to develop closer working relationships and build up the trust of local black and minority ethnic communities?
- provide support, advice, guidance, regular supervision and training to support outreach workers? Do you develop and build on their skills, experience and knowledge to ensure that they are well equipped? Do you ensure that they are not isolated and can carry out their role effectively?
- offer appropriate initial pathways and routes of progression for outreach learners in further or higher education, training or employment?

Examples of good practice

- One organisation visited as part of the study effectively uses a video to support recruitment of deaf people. The video is designed to inform deaf students about existing provision. It uses text and British Sign Language throughout, and includes snap-shots of learners from a range of backgrounds, including black learners and staff.
- A voluntary organisation markets its provision through black and minority language newspapers and uses community leaders and key black and minority ethnic networks to publicise and promote its provision.
- An organisation in the South works closely with black and minority ethnic outreach workers to reach potential learners. Outreach workers visit venues and locations where black and minority ethnic groups frequent and they hold informal speakers' corners where they can talk about education provision offered in the local community and where potential learners can ask about what is available and how to access it. Often these activities are conducted in community languages.
- Two organisations run by black and/or minority ethnic people and aimed at this target group market their provision through Asian and African-Caribbean radio stations and by displaying leaflets in venues where these groups frequent. Leaflets are also left on the counter of African-Caribbean social club bars and in shops and greengrocers.
- A popular place for marketing and advertising courses in inner city areas is doctors' surgeries, health centres and hospitals. One organisation has a community worker who visits crowded waiting rooms and gives informal talks about education.
- A community college has worked with army, police and education providers to erect five learning tents at the local Asian Melas across the city. In total there are four Melas over a period of two months each summer. Each Mela attracts over 250,000 people from all walks of life and from different regions in the country. The learning tents offer taster courses and advice and guidance on education and training. During the first year of the event the college significantly increased the number of people from black and minority ethnic communities taking up their courses. They used external funding to cover the events. Information about education and training was broadcast from the tents.
- A community college worked with the Asian, Turkish and Jewish communities in their area to host a number of events around the history of each community and its people. Local people wrote stories and poetry and gave talks about their experience of living in their own countries and in the local community. This informal activity led a number of local people to become involved in projects where they had to use the local university to do some research and use college IT equipment to search for information on the internet. Many local people have now gone onto IT courses and local history courses in more formal settings in their communities.
- A community education service that was finding it difficult to attract Asian adults with learning difficulties and disabilities found the funding to employ an Asian outreach worker to meet families in the community and to inform them about provision for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. She gained the confidence of the community and managed to introduce a significant number of parents and adults to the education service. Critical success factors of this type of marketing include employing a worker from the Asian community who can speak at least two community languages, who lives in the community and is known and respected by Asian families.

First steps

The first stage in involving learners is ensuring, as far as possible, that learners are in a good position to make informed choices and decisions. This involves making information about programmes, services and facilities widely available to learners/potential learners in accessible formats. The advantages of sharing information with learners include:

- learners being better equipped when making choices about the educational programmes and type or level of learning/learner support they need;
- learners making informed choices about their educational needs;
- learners having a better understanding of the programmes on offer and being more able and equipped to take responsibility for their own learning.

Historically, organisations provide information about their programmes in a number of ways. These methods do not always meet the needs of the black and minority ethnic communities and, therefore, they are disengaged from the process. Some examples of good practice in reaching under-represented learners include:

Open evenings

A sixth form college in the North West of England offers parents the opportunity to learn about the college, college programmes, its ethos and facilities in their mother tongue. Second year students act as college staff for the evening and they greet and induct parents in a range of community languages.

Parents feel part of the process, have a better understanding of what the college has to offer their son/daughter and are generally impressed with the level of confidence and competence that learners gain from their learning experience in the college.

Study days

The same sixth form college holds two study days per year where potential students can visit the college and participate in lessons and organised activities. Existing drama, music and media students stage a performance on the life and times of their college experience. They put on a performance for potential learners and allow them to hear about the college through dance, drama and music – a students' view.

Teachers and students at the college feel that this type of introduction to the college, and college life, is very powerful. It gives potential learners, their parents and the community a genuine insight into the organisation and its ethos. It also builds the confidence and self-esteem of existing learners.

Retaining, teaching and including learners

An example from Oldham LEA

The retention of black and minority ethnic learners rests on delivery within a black and minority ethnic perspective with meaningful resources which support the Individual Learning Programme and appropriate support. Celebration of achievement promotes retention. The involvement of black learners in the evaluation and presentation of their work, whether in displays, presentations or award evenings, is a critical part of curriculum development.

Funding for the overhaul and development of resources has been tight to date, but black and minority ethnic staff development can involve learners in the production as well as the processes. Staff and learners have been involved in the production of a Learners' Handbook which serves as an introduction and guide to the English syllabus at beginners' and subsequent levels with multilingual translations.

Group work and interactive methods are encouraged – these often focus on real-life situations which can build confidence and empower the learner. The focus on listening and speaking is maintained through these methods. An area for future black staff development is to build in more multi-media-resourced delivery, using audio and video techniques in communication.

Using ICT can enhance self-esteem, especially for those who are doing this for the first time, and progress is often swift. Access to information and widening horizons and networks are real targets, along with meaningful and self-review CT resources. We need to have the resources to take this skills-linked provision into the communities as it is currently only available in two community centres. Many black learners are able to use ICT where there are school-based courses.

Business Administration and IT are run in conjunction with short service-based office placements for black and minority ethnic learners. One learner has recently moved into a regular volunteer placement with a voluntary agency. As this is a skill-gap in Oldham it would be an advantage to find further placements for these learners and build in self-presentation and interview skills to this course.

Childcare as a skill-linked English course needs to be linked to anti-oppressive recruitment strategies within our own and other agencies. A clear progression map with a black and minority ethnic perspective is development work for lifelong learning agencies. Provision with any agency will need to have support structures built in – not added as an afterthought when a crisis occurs.

The voice of the black and minority ethnic learner can be extended beyond the current involvement in course evaluation and review into a forum linked to the feedback and response loops. It might begin the process of access to further study and to employment – and inclusion. Best Value would be a starting point.

Support for learning

Effective support for learning underpins anti-racist education because it can make the difference between a learning environment that matches the requirements of black and minority ethnic learners and one that fails to do so. Anti-racist education requires that support for learning is delivered as an integral part of the learning programme rather than as a separate and unrelated activity.

The notion of the learner's entitlement to extra-curricular support is a fairly recent development in the context of adult education. Traditionally there has been an expectation that subject tutors should provide any personal or learning support to their learners from within their already limited contact hours. In such a context, tutors' assessment of individual language and learning support needs are likely to be based on their own subjective or arbitrary criteria rather than objective appraisal of students' competence. This unsatisfactory arrangement, unsupported by training or access to the necessary resources, has been to the detriment of all learners, particularly part-timers.

Supporting learners is essential because it:

- enables all learners to have equal access to the curriculum they have chosen
- helps learners to progress and achieve
- assists effective transition to programmes, between programmes and beyond further education and training.

Support for learning is support which

- enhances access to the curriculum
- offers support to all learners (generic services)
- is accessible to a number/range of different services
- offers additional/specialist support to some learners
- is clearly allocated and recognised by all staff within the institution and is evident to those outside
- is organised and systematic
- provides accessible information
- provides opportunities for learners to comment on teaching and learning and on the quality of learning support itself

- has established links with community, careers services and LEA
- matches the learning environment to the personal requirements of the learner
- ensures that staff have appropriate expertise
- ensures that teachers are well briefed about learners' requirements
- is practical and relevant to learners' needs.

Examples of good practice

A college in the Midlands has well-established links with local African-Caribbean and Asian voluntary and community organisations. This enables the organisations to access the minority ethnic library service, interpreter and translator service and relevant and appropriate culturally sensitive resources. The college has an exchange staff scheme where black and minority ethnic staff can work across the college to deliver learner support. Learners can also access support from the local voluntary and community organisations. This is paid for by the college if they are unable to offer the type of support required by the learner.

A black voluntary organisation in London works closely with the LEA to provide learner support for African/African-Caribbean/Asian young people and adults. They also work with the LEA to deliver joint staff development and training. LEA learners benefit from the learner support offered by the voluntary organisation. They have regular access to the women-only counselling service, and learners also benefit from the use of prayer rooms and facilities for dietary requirements. Access to translation and interpreting services is also a benefit to the LEA.

In both instances, the college, LEA and the local voluntary organisation have a better understanding of what support different black and minority ethnic learners need. They also know how to make this more readily accessible by working in partnership with relevant local providers who have knowledge and experience of working with black and minority ethnic groups.

People from black and minority ethnic backgrounds who are under-represented in education and training are often financially disadvantaged, usually because they are unable to gain access to employment. The cost of transport, childcare and purchasing the necessary learning materials can provide them with a disincentive to participate in learning unless they are able to access practical support for learning from learning providers or elsewhere.

Current good practice in providing support for learning requires learning providers to develop language, learning and personal support by encouraging staff to think of them as services integral to curriculum development, but also as services in their own right.

Managers need to recognise that teaching staff should not be presumed to have the capacity to be tutors, counsellors, assessors and guidance workers to their students. They have to acknowledge that these are all specialist skills for which staff need formal training.

Students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are often grappling with a range of problems and issues that can interfere with their learning. This applies to a wide range of learners, but particularly and more specifically to refugees and asylum seekers who have the added stress of having to deal with homelessness, housing and financial difficulties due to lack of employment opportunities in a general climate of intolerance and bigotry.

Support for these learners may require the intervention of specialist agencies, including counselling. The establishment of support groups and peer group support systems can benefit these learners. Also effective are mentoring schemes, which encourage community members to offer support and guidance to individual learners. Mentors from black and minority ethnic communities can help to compensate for lack of black role models within statutory learning organisations. The success of mentoring schemes to support black learners depends heavily on the commitment of learning providers to developing and sustaining effective community networks and partnerships.

Socio-economic difficulties encountered by learners may include:

- studying a foreign language;
- housing problems;
- homelessness;
- childcare responsibilities;
- lack of employment opportunities;
- harassment by neighbours;
- harassment by immigration officials.

Examples of good practice

Peer group support

A local community group in Rotherham encourages Asian women to access a child development course. The women who speak English act as 'buddies' to women whose first language is not English. The arrangement is that the teacher delivers the lesson in English and the 'buddies' translate it into their mother tongue. Learners find this very beneficial as they can translate the learning into the home and use it effectively with their own children.

Effective tutorial system

A sixth form college in the Northwest uses the ASDAN record of achievement to offer key skills to all learners. A tutorial group system operates in the college twice a week for one hour at a time. Black and minority ethnic learners have access to one-to-one tutorials in their own language where possible. Volunteers are used as translators for learners who prefer to have tutorials in their mother tongue. Volunteers are usually from minority ethnic backgrounds. They receive training in tutorial skills and advice and guidance to help them deliver effective tutorials. Some volunteers have gone on to further education and training to underpin their skills in working with learners.

Induction

New learners at a college in the Midlands induct their learners through video and audio tape support. Learners attend an induction event which is conducted in English and where the learners want to have the same information in different community languages they can take away an audio tape in five community languages. There is also a video which is shown separately during induction to Urdu/Bengali and Arabic speakers. This resource was developed with European funding as part of a 'reaching the learners' strategy.

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An example of an organisation working to develop good practice

A clear focus on the individual is key to identifying and matching the learning support needed. In this situation, anti-oppressive practice is crucial in order to prevent protection, exploitation and dependence. The aim is to empower and enable ownership of learning.

All courses are free up to GCSE level in the EAL curriculum of our service. From the outset an initial assessment which uses language support for beginners and culturally appropriate materials builds an individual programme. Ideally this will be mapped to national standards and is currently linked to entry levels L1 and L2 knowledge and skills levels in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in English.

The first outcome from the Initial Assessment process is the Individual Learning Programme, which is negotiated with the tutor and with the language support section. This sets out long-term aims and short-term targets within prioritised everyday language skills needed. This is also the beginning of the Plan Study Review process undertaken by each black learner as she/he keeps a regular learning record and reviews targets with the tutor every three months.

The Learner Profile is the second outcome, showing prior learning, basic individual information and support needs. It is kept by the tutor. This profile would move with the learner between courses and curriculum areas or wider if the learner needed this. The Plan Study Review document is owned by the learner and is the primary internal and external evidence of learning and self-review. A copy is held centrally by the Curriculum Manager.

All tutors seek regular evaluation from learners and complete a summative Course Review underpinned by feedback from learners. This in turn is used by the Curriculum Manager to review the curriculum as a self-review tool, alongside other monitoring systems such as observation of delivery, staff development, register audit, appraisal and peer observations. Black and minority ethnic learners naturally turn to Language Support Workers to share concerns and the ongoing liaison between these staff and tutors means these can be addressed swiftly.

Support to the learner from a black and minority ethnic perspective is crucial. A staff team of bi-lingual and multi-lingual tutors and language support workers brings with them first-hand experience of the support needs of these learners as well as wider knowledge of the impact of learning within the community. Provided the response is positive and from a black and minority ethnic perspective, these staff then take on the enabling and mentoring roles which take learners forward.

Single-gender provision, with childcare in an accessible or secure location, with progression and skills-linked choices within a given geographical area, has assisted in supporting progression between levels and between curriculum areas, as is the case, for example, with current black and minority ethnic learners about to take GCSE English. From Level 2, the provision becomes mixed-gender classes and some other courses are mixed.

Class size impacts upon the quality of support to learners and tutors are encouraged to self-regulate numbers. Updated information on all provision is needed in each locality, so that optional courses can be offered. Provision for black and minority ethnic people has been notorious for class sizes which are too big to meet individual needs, which should remain the responsibility of the tutor where language support or volunteer support is in place. This Service seeks a maximum of eight black and minority ethnic learners in EAL provision. The issue of support to black learners in the wider curriculum has still to be addressed, but all tutors can seek support for learners via an appointed co-ordinator for learning support.

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Crèche support is offered with daytime classes and the Learner Access Fund can meet transport, materials, equipment, tuition and accreditation costs for the learner. This is negotiated in confidence with the tutor and language support worker if needed and the Service speed of response to this request is a priority. This system, together with access to Advice and Guidance for the black learner, can meet the longer-term aims of progression, and the Individual Learning Account is also a support. All tutors are well-briefed on this.

The EAL curriculum is linked to the local Advice and Guidance network of voluntary and statutory agencies. Learners know they have access to professional advice and guidance and can access this through the tutor and Curriculum Manager. It is, without doubt, supportive for the black learner to be taught by practitioners who can offer support in the appropriate language. It would be a natural development to build a network of volunteers with a wider source of languages.

Language and support

Tutors frequently assume that black and minority ethnic learners who lack English communication skills require basic education. This is, of course, not always the case. Many black and minority ethnic people who lack English skills are highly qualified and multi-lingual. Often the deficit is not with the learners but with the institutions, and the problem is that the quality and level of language and learning support provided by some institutions is insufficient. Staff in some learning institutions are often unaware of the needs of black and minority ethnic learners and, in particular, refugees. Educational institutions need to ensure that they develop language policies if they are not already in place. Institutions should also establish mechanisms for assessing the performance levels of refugees, asylum seekers and non-English speaking immigrants to ensure additional language provision is geared to enable them to operate at similar or higher levels in the learning situation and in society as early as possible. Whenever practicable, institutions should establish assessment centres in partnership with other learning providers, including schools and Learning and Skills Councils.

Language support should be combined with the provision of appropriate information and guidance so that learners can take responsibility and control of their own learning. It should be flexible, wide-ranging and be an integral part of the curriculum offered. It should be written into individuals' learning agreements where required.

Of course, not everyone needs help in improving English. However, a pre-requisite for those who do is the knowledge that there are programmes which are accessible and readily available to them. Functional language teaching requires close co-operation and planning between subject and language tutors. To improve language provision staff should assess the learning needs of students and ensure that coherent measures are put in place to meet these needs.

This will involve:

- identification of individual language needs;
- analysis of programme/course language requirements;
- identification of individuals' learning support needs;
- communication between staff providing teaching and support to those learners.

A meaningful assessment of individual needs will involve thorough investigation of what learners can do in their first language, previous education experiences and a diagnostic assessment of the language demands of their chosen course and their ability to meet these successfully. It is also important that teachers monitor their own use of language to ensure that the subject matter is clear. This means identifying the language demands of the course and planning appropriate teaching and learning strategies. Teachers should be prepared to examine their own attitudes and actions in an effort to ensure that their expectations of and their behaviour towards black and minority ethnic learners are not influenced by stereotypes, misconceptions or negative views of those learners. An effective language curriculum should offer learners access to the organisation's mainstream and discrete provision. It should be flexible, accredited and match the needs of learners.

Where the need for language support is identified, it should be regarded as integral to other curriculum provision and should not be separated from mainstream provision either in terms of location or progression routes and pathways.

Organisations should avoid the tendency towards ghettoisation and should encourage subject tutors, managers and support staff to regard English language teaching as inclusive to the needs and requirements of the learners' mainstream academic or vocational aspirations.

The assessment of individual learners' language needs has to be closely related to the language requirements of their chosen mainstream programme. Students with language support needs require different levels of support to meet their learning goals. They require organisations to have in place the right identification and referral systems in order for them to make effective use of the language services. They also have to be able to gain access to specialist support services in order to access generic support that is available to all learners. For example, a refugee may need to gain access to interpreting services before being able to talk to the Grants Officer or Advice and Guidance Service.

Good practice is carried out when there is provision for bi-lingual support in classroom-based learning: enrolment; induction; tutorials; advice and guidance; and where crèche facilities are available for all classes or alternative individual childcare arrangements can be made. Moreover, this is reinforced when books and materials are in good supply; funding for transport is provided; and where the organisation has developed culturally appropriate learning.

Examples of good practice

Bradford police are learning Urdu in a bid to get closer to local communities. Weekly classes include basic phrases together with correct ways to introduce oneself.

Further examples of good practice include:

- 'Bi-lingual support is available for learners from most linguistic backgrounds. Staff familiar with such languages as Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Cantonese, Arabic and French is usually on hand during registration. Bi-lingual tutors are provided for some classes and they are able to help give on-going advice and guidance.' (Stockton Adult Education Service)
- 'Teaching takes place in small groups, in most cases with two members of staff so that individual needs can be met. Project workers offer language and learning support in English or mother tongue.'

contd.

- 'Initial guidance – students have an initial interview in their mother tongue with bilingual support, where applicable, to establish expectations and needs.'
- 'Volunteer interpreters provide language support in student's mother tongue. Tutors are able to communicate in Urdu and other community languages... The presence of language support on this course is intended to open access to minority ethnic students with language difficulties but it is not exclusively targeted at them.' (Buckinghamshire County Council)
- 'Extra tutorial support is offered at specific times, e.g. Ramadan. Timing of the course and crèche facilities are offered as part of the Adult Education Programme. Language support is built into the programme with separate tutorials looking at childcare content. Support programmes are offered to meet either or both of these needs.' (Manchester Adult Education Service)

Providing welcoming and safe learning environments

Classes are held in community centres and primary schools. They are familiar places where learners feel they can experiment with language and simulated social interaction in a non-threatening atmosphere. Rooms are well equipped, comfortable and spacious.

There are some issues here about how to fund small classes, how to meet the needs of speakers of wider languages, also about the time it takes to complete diagnostic assessments. There is a number of reasons why learning providers may choose not to adopt some of these practices. However, if we continually find excuses not to do some things that are necessary and relevant to students' ability to access learning provision, are we not denying students rights which others enjoy automatically, thereby compounding disadvantage and social exclusion?

Language support checklist

Does your organisation have:

- *a strategic approach to improving accesses to information, advice and guidance, literature and materials?*
- *accessible information on types and levels of language support?*
- *established links with translation and interpretation services and with voluntary/community organisations?*
- *arrangements for regular tutorials and reviews of learners' language support requirements?*
- *language support linked to the learner's main programme provided by well trained, experienced and understanding staff?*
- *effective assessment processes that can identify the learners' language support needs?*

Mentoring as a strategy for supporting black and minority ethnic learners

As a result of their past experiences in educational institutions, black and minority ethnic learners often develop informal support networks within the institutions to assist one another to progress and achieve.

To assist and support new groups of learners, institutions sometimes establish mentoring schemes. Mentoring, as a support structure, has supported black and minority ethnic learners well over time. For example, a further education college in Manchester has established an excellent mentoring programme for black access students. However, this service is funded externally and is, therefore, dependent on funding being maintained.

Mentoring is a tried and tested interventionist strategy where others are charged with supporting and guiding learners using their own skills, knowledge and experiences. Mentoring is, and can be, used to produce, amongst other outcomes, role models, higher aspirations, increased motivation, improved attainment and the reduction of angst at transition phases.

David Blunkett, when Secretary of State for Education and Employment, was quoted in the *Times Educational Supplement* (13 March 1997), as endorsing mentoring when he outlined the Government's plans for the role of industry in education. Similarly, Andrew Smith (*The Observer*, 6 July 1997) lauded the successful use of mentoring schemes.

Mentoring has proved beneficial in a number of ways and should be supported in the future by learning institutions to benefit all learners, and in particular those who have been the hardest to re-engage in learning because of previous negative educational experiences or exclusion. Mentoring has been successful in reducing exclusions and raising standards among minority ethnic pupils, particularly when it is part of a wider school strategy, when there is a commitment from senior managers, and when there are well-trained mentors and good links with teachers and parents.

Why students sometimes need mentors

- To support them in exposure to vocational areas
- To offer a better understanding of what is available to them educationally and to identify career options
- To support their under-achievement
- To support achievement
- To help them to re-evaluate the benefits of learning
- To support language and communication
- To support them financially
- To help them to manage home and study
- To help them to improve their self-image and self-worth
- To combat gender, social and racial discrimination

- To support them in staying the course
- To combat poverty and social disadvantages.

Good practice in mentoring

The example of City College Manchester

In 1991 City College (then South Manchester College) became only the second FE college in the UK to establish a mentoring scheme for African-Caribbean and Asian students, following Howard Jeffrey's pioneering project in North London College. The first three years of the programme were funded by money from the European Social Fund (ESF).

The mentoring service has extended its activity to local schools. This programme is aimed at reducing exclusion and enhancing the academic achievements of inner-city school pupils, particularly African-Caribbean boys. The school mentoring service is funded by Progress Trust and A6 Routes.

Structure and systems

The mentor service structure incorporates three layers of operation.

First, there are staff who provide managerial and administrative services. The aim is to ensure that the service is effectively promoted to students, resourced properly and accountable. The service provides high quality mentoring and has built into it evaluation and monitoring plans to assess how well it is meeting its targets.

Second, there are staff who act as the first point of contact for students and for mentors. Student advisors provide an initial assessment of the students' needs to identify other appropriate services they may benefit from or in order to refer them on to other appropriate services.

The third layer of operation comprises the mentors themselves. These are mainly African-Caribbean and African volunteers from a range of educational and professional backgrounds who have agreed to facilitate group mentoring sessions or to establish one-to-one partnerships with students. Group mentoring sessions are usually one-off activities whereas one-to-one partnerships may involve regular meetings with students.

The process of mentoring

The City College mentoring service provides learners with a mentor who is usually more advanced in age or education and work experiences, and who can facilitate the development of younger or less experienced individuals. It assists students who have no recent experience of formal education to develop their skills and knowledge in, for example, the planning and presentation of course work. Guidance and support is given to students in relation to 'where they are at now' and what decisions and actions they need to take regarding their future academic/career goals. The service provides students with further opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with mentors from a range of professions and occupations.

There are three main areas in which the mentor provides support.

Academic: The mentor discusses with the student the relevance of academic qualifications to the job market. Practical assistance is also given in the planning and management of academic tasks.

Career: This is an opportunity for the student to meet with mentors whose work is similar to their own career aspirations. Through group mentoring and one-to-one meetings the mentor is able to share with students their own experience of education and training and how this has influenced their present career choice. Where possible may provide work-shadowing and work-placement opportunities.

Personal: The mentor supports the student to identify particular areas of strength and weaknesses e.g. time management, meeting deadlines, completing assignments, self-presentation and communication styles.

Recruiting mentors

The following are possible places from which to recruit mentors.

- Community-based organisations
- Colleges/universities
- Voluntary groups
- Professional bodies
- Local networks

Mentor induction

It is important at the outset to explain the aims and objectives of the mentoring programme; the responsibilities of the mentor; and the benefits of mentoring to both mentors and those whom they mentor.

City College runs an initial half-day introduction to the volunteers who have expressed an interest in becoming mentors. The areas covered include: what a mentor does; what areas might be covered in a mentoring relationship: and how the mentor can contribute to a successful or unsuccessful relationship.

Mentor training

After induction, City College has a basic skills training workshop which is available for volunteers who have expressed the need to develop their mentoring skills in any of the following areas:

- Listening
- Building rapport
- Action planning
- Problem-solving
- Questioning techniques
- Time management
- Motivating and encouraging.

Stages of the mentoring partnership

The beginning: Developing trust and establishing rapport, student and mentor getting to know each other, establishing ground rules.

The middle goals: Task-setting and practical support where required e.g. opportunity to shadow mentor at their place of work.

The end: achievement/non-achievement of goals. Reflecting on what went right and what went wrong.

One-to-one partnerships – some do's and don'ts

Do's	Don'ts
■ set aside sufficient time for meetings	■ give the student all the answers
■ be prepared to listen to the student's worries, be patient	■ act on the student's behalf, support them to manage the situation on their own
■ guide the student on how to resolve a difficult situation	■ exclude personal issues and concerns from topics of discussion
■ draw on your own experience where possible	

A case study from City College Manchester

Jason is an 18-year-old male student who was referred to the mentoring service by his course tutor. The tutor was concerned about Jason's behaviour and felt that if it did not improve he would be excluded.

A meeting was arranged for Jason to meet with a 33-year-old African-Caribbean male mentor. The first meeting went well and they both agreed to meet regularly to address issues of personal development.

Since the first meeting Jason's confidence has grown enormously. His behaviour and his relationship with the rest of his female classmates has improved significantly. This improvement is also reflected in his time keeping and the standard of his course work.

Jason is now in his second year and has gained part-time employment in a local restaurant. He and his mentor recently met with the college guidance team to further discuss academic development and the options open to him once he has completed his course. Jason's ambition is to own his own catering business. He continues to meet his mentor on a weekly basis.

What works

Throughout the publication so far we have looked at effective strategies for reaching and informing black and minority ethnic learners who have been 'switched off' from learning. However, there is no one definitive solution. It is a case of looking at what we do now and what we can do in the future to build on what works and to develop new strategies for engaging these learners. What we must avoid are thinking and actions that are discriminatory and action that is an afterthought. Effective strategies require positive action and a rich mix of ingredients that will make participation in learning attractive to black and minority ethnic people.

There are of course other key ingredients required to make learning more accessible to black learners but these need to be identified by tutors and support staff through assessment, advice and guidance processes. Change in the mainstream work of learning providers must be a major goal. The learning provider needs to change its way of doing things (not just changing the colour of the staff) if it is going to attract more and different learners. Efforts to meet the needs of black learners must take into account the realities of life in Britain. These include racism, racial abuse, harassment and discrimination in education, housing, and employment.

To provide quality education and related materials and resources for black learners, learning providers must become more aware of the concerns and priorities of black communities and be open to influence from them. There is a correlation between the extent to which black staff feel valued and empowered within the organisation and the extent to which black learners accessing the provision also feel valued and empowered.

Perhaps the greatest cause of inequality in our society is discrimination (intentional or unintentional) – on grounds of race, culture or beliefs. Learning providers have a duty to lead by example, setting clear goals and parameters for ensuring race equality within their organisations. Things that can make a difference include:

- ensuring that racial harassment towards staff and learners is not tolerated
- treating both staff and learners with respect throughout the organisation
- ensuring that inequalities do not occur due to language differences, difficulties, cultural differences, or the stereotypes which staff and other learners have of black and minority ethnic people.

All of these are areas where learning providers need to apply creative solutions to ensure that all sections of the community benefit equally, and receive the services they are entitled to as defined by their needs and circumstances. Staff development programmes, new recruitment and selection strategies, and the development of partnerships working towards educational improvement within the community can all make a difference.

Decision-making and organisational policies will largely be in the hands of senior managers. But practitioners can also take action to move things forward. Black practitioners should be involved where possible in the formulation of any organisation's equal opportunities policy. They should ensure that all learners are aware of the policy and its requirements. It is important that organisations have in place a member of the teaching staff in each subject area that has a responsibility for co-ordinating work on equality issues in the curriculum.

- Does your organisation's prospectus contain a statement about race equality and equal opportunities that positively welcomes people from black and minority ethnic communities?

- How can information about learning programmes be made accessible to people from black and minority ethnic communities?
- What specialist educational guidance and advice facilities are there (or that can be developed) which are open to people from black and minority ethnic communities?

Teachers should have an input into the formulation of the whole policy for the organisation as a whole, and there is much that the individual teacher can do in their own right. In their specific subject area they can take action to enhance equality for all learners and at the same time challenge racist behaviour, language and attitudes and lead by example.

The curriculum should reflect ethnic and cultural diversity and all learners should be encouraged to respect and value people of different cultural backgrounds. All learners should be encouraged to understand the nature of prejudice and be equipped to challenge it wherever it arises.

Examples of good practice

At a sixth form college a group of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities was encouraged to discuss the meaning of equal opportunities for themselves, and other marginalised groups. The learners watched the psychology video, *Brown Eyes Blue Eyes* which was used to provide a practical activity where the learners were split into two groups, those with brown eyes and those with blue eyes. The brown-eyed people were not allowed to go to breaks and were made to do the work for the blue-eyed people. The blue-eyed people were allowed to listen to music, go to lunch early and work on the computers all day. At the beginning of the session when the students were asked what equal opportunities meant they did not know or understand the concept. However, after this practical activity they were able to discuss what they thought was fair and not so fair about the process.

In another session there was a discussion on famous scientists and inventors. Famous authors and inventors were also discussed. Participants then wrote the list on the board and looked at how many of these people were of black or minority ethnic origin. It turned out that amongst the list of 30 none was of black or minority ethnic origin. The group was then asked to use the internet to identify a number of famous scientists, inventors, authors and world figures who were black or of minority ethnic origin. Some learners were given the task of interviewing other students in the college to find out how many they could list.

This exercise resulted in a project about great inventors, authors and historic figures from black and minority ethnic communities. The students with learning difficulties and disabilities then used the theme in their assembly to raise awareness of the fact that they did not know any of this information before the session on equality. Mainstream students benefited as a result of the assembly.

It is important that practitioners understand and acknowledge that learners from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds have contributions to make to society and that they have their own distinct identities and should be valued and treated as individuals.

The right people

From a range of discussions on what makes a good teacher it was discovered that in almost every organisation there are 'Learning Champions', people who hook learners in, motivate learners and offer positive learning experiences. 'Learning champions' emerged from discussions and research as being the key players in widening participation for 'hard-to-reach' people. Many projects relied upon one person, whom we define as a 'learning champion' for the success of their delivery, and it is fair to say that these were remarkable individuals. The following characteristics and facts emerged from research and discussions about getting 'the right people' for the job:

- Many of the most successful Project Supervisors did not come from mainstream educational backgrounds, so they did not necessarily use traditional methods of teaching. They were more creative and innovative in their approach and delivery.
- Many had themselves shared the negative experiences of learning which had put their learners in the 'hard-to-reach' category.
- They tended to be practical, 'doers', who offered experiential learning opportunities rather then teaching in the traditional sense.
- They had a natural quality of leadership which encouraged team identity.
- They were empathic people, who naturally put themselves in the position of the individual learner and put the learner at the heart of the learning process.
- They were all prepared to get involved in the personal, social and cultural lives of their learners, but also had an instinctive understanding of when to stand back and when to refer learners on to professionals.
- They all had a thorough knowledge of their subjects but were also open to developing new areas as a group learning process in which they played the role of learning experience leaders rather than just tutors teaching a set curriculum.
- They were expert in involving all learners in the learning process by ensuring that significant elements of the curriculum reflected the lives of all the organisation's population of learners.

It would be fair to say that an organisation could offer the best curriculum possible, have gone through exemplary consultation and recruitment procedures, provided the best learning environment possible – but by failing to recruit and place the right people at the helm at the point of contact and recruitment, might still fail to achieve distinctive results for black and minority ethnic adult learners.

Curriculum issues

For black and minority ethnic people equality of access to educational opportunity has been offset by disturbing questions concerning the quality of the teaching and learning experience in schools, colleges and universities. Some educators in the adult sector have undertaken important initiatives to identify the various needs of black and minority ethnic groups and individuals and have experimented with innovative forms of provision. However, in general adult educators have not been so responsive to the needs of black and minority ethnic groups.

Learning providers are at present often failing to meet or are meeting these needs on an inadequate scale. To rectify this situation, learning providers should give much more consideration to negotiation of curriculum content.

There appears to be a communication gap between learning providers and black and minority ethnic communities. Too many learning providers offer courses without taking into account the needs of black and minority ethnic communities, not knowing if the people in the area want them. There is also an acute lack of awareness, generally speaking, amongst learning providers of the needs of black and minority ethnic communities. Our knowledge of the extent and changing nature of educational inequalities in Britain is patchy and our understanding of the causes of inequalities much more so. (Pantazis and Gordon, 2000)

Educationalists have a specific role to play in taking forward the recommendations of the MacPherson Report – recommendations which place particular emphasis on the leadership role of public institutions.

"To teach in varied communities not only our paradigms must shift but also the way we think, write, speak. The engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself." (hooks, 1994)

"There is a small body of literature which takes a particular view of the curriculum in education institutions. This literature goes beyond advocating a more generic 'skills' concept of what is taught and learned in the classroom...The curriculum covers more than just the syllabus. The learning environment and teaching relationships also impact on the learner experience. There is a tendency in such literature to theorise about these issues in terms of power and knowledge. Those who argue for a new kind of curriculum suggest that current ways of constructing knowledge and therefore the teaching of knowledge are value-laden and designed to privilege only certain groups in society." (*Challenging the discourses of inclusion and exclusion with off-limits curricula*, Preece, 2000)

"Exclusion and inclusion as well as power, are closely linked to what goes on in educational institutions: neither what is taught, nor who studies what, are neutral issues. The cultural rules surrounding education are closely linked to the organisation and resources of teaching." (Deem, 1996)

In the book *Educating Rita and her sisters*, Veronica McGivney writes, "In recent years, education for adults and women in particular has resembled a kind of dance – some steps forward, a few back and to the side, some moving up and down on the spot, the resumption of the original pattern but with significant variations." This is also true of education for black adults. The inequalities in terms of educational experience and outcomes for people of African, Caribbean and Asian origin have been well documented. The 1990 Trust draft response to the Government White Paper *Excellence In Schools* (1997) outlines the research, which has supported this point.

Two notable reports that clearly document the inequalities in education for these learners include the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education of Children of Minority ethnic Groups (Rampton, 1981) and the Committee's final report, generally known as the *Swann Report* (1985). One of the most significant conclusions of both reports was the view that children of minority ethnic origin were under-achieving in British schools as a result of racism and discrimination inherent in primary and secondary schools.

Black communities have expressed concerns about the experience of black learners' in schools. Black adult learners' accounts of their own experiences of learning are mostly negative and highlight the following areas of concern:

- Racist teachers
- Ethnocentric curriculum content
- Teachers' low expectations of black students
- Poor and negative teacher attitudes
- Underachievement
- Predominantly white teachers and managers
- Unwelcoming learning environments.

If learning providers are to draw more people unaccustomed to education into learning activities they have to change their attitudes, approaches and organisational culture. This means that they may want to consider:

- opening up access to learning in terms of location, delivery arrangements and content
- providing learning opportunities outside conventional educational structures
- engaging in, supporting and nurturing effective partnerships between themselves and local black communities, learning providers and others in delivering learning
- adding value to activities supported by black organisations and providers of learning.

To achieve this, learning providers, managers and staff should consider the development of provision which:

- has new approaches to recruiting, providing and supporting learning, in respect of black and minority ethnic groups
- has activities that centre on efforts to involve black and minority ethnic groups
- provides for black learners the same high levels of quality in teaching and other activities as for any other learner

- has effective local partnerships which extend and add value to the organisation's existing provision
- works closely with relevant agencies (including black agencies) to ensure that the sum total of resources directed to a local area is used in the most effective way
- supports activities that take learning into sectors of the black and minority ethnic community not reached by existing provision
- provides opportunities that are relevant to black peoples' lives and experiences of structural discrimination and disadvantage
- delivers learning in ways that interest and attract black and minority ethnic learners who have been alienated from provision they have seen as excluding or irrelevant.

Examples of good practice

Training and empowering black and minority ethnic parents to deal with the British education system

A project funded by the Adult and Community Learning Fund supports black and minority ethnic parents to understand and access the British education system. It deals with issues of school exclusions, GCSE and A level examinations, understanding tests in primary and secondary schools and giving information and advice on how to be an effective parent and school governor. Parents are trained to teach other parents how to access and deal with the system. It has brought parents and teachers closer together and allows for exchange of ideas and issues.

Developing communication and key skills by working with black learners to produce learning materials that reflect their cultures and backgrounds

Another ACLF project has worked with black and minority ethnic learners to produce culturally-sensitive materials for learning. Parents have identified resources used in their church and Saturday schools that are age-appropriate for adults and have introduced them to the college. College staff meet termly to review materials for racial and gender bias. Materials that are deemed to be inappropriate are withdrawn and discussed with black and minority ethnic learners in termly focus groups. These focus groups help to include the learners in decision-making but also establish good working relationships between staff and learners.

Working with local black groups to identify new ways of involving black males

In Bradford an ACLF project aims to engage black men from the community in adult learning. The project has contracted specialist staff to deliver courses such as Jamaican wood carving, motor vehicle maintenance, Chinese scripting and a range of other cultural courses that engage men in learning. The take-up for these courses has exceeded expectation. Initially offered as tasters, the courses became fully-fledged courses when learners showed an interest in pursuing them further.

Providing active learning programmes for black and minority ethnic women new to the country, through cultural activities

A refugee group in Kent is receiving training in accessing the British education system. The course aims to help women from refugee communities to gain an awareness of local schools in

contd.

the areas where they live. The women learn about the UK school system, where to buy uniforms and how to help children with their homework. It helps the women to understand activities such as preparation of healthy packed lunches, children's diet, the need for homework to be done in conducive environments and how to utilise local amenities such as libraries for study. Volunteer tutors are recruited from established refugee communities, handouts are presented in a range of languages alongside the English text and learning activities are delivered using real-life resources and materials.

Other good practice examples are listed below.

- Ensuring that partnership and collaboration are central to provision. For example, working with local partners such as Race Equality Councils, Commission for Racial Equality and voluntary education projects
- Local black and minority ethnic centres – Bangladeshi centre, Indian association, Chinese language and cultural associations
- Making approaches appropriate to black learners through black and minority ethnic community groups and providing outreach activities in the local community
- Developing good relationships with local journalists from the black minority ethnic press to ensure regular press coverage of what is on offer
- Disseminating course material to other professional outlets with links to black clients such as social services, health service, job centres, youth services, local libraries, health centres
- Working with schools – particularly those involved with family learning
- Production of reading material in community languages
- Production of a video and audio tape, which offers information on what is available in community educational provisions by the voluntary and statutory sector
- Social/community gatherings
- Use of local Asian/African Caribbean radio stations to publicise provision. Getting a learner to advocate on behalf of the organisation on the basis of their own experience is also effective.

This list is not prescriptive and does not offer examples of how things should be done. It is merely a list of ideas that have been tried and tested elsewhere. It is important to remember that all learning institutions are different, operate differently and have different cultures, systems and priorities. It is therefore best if you discuss the ideas and topics having regard to your particular circumstances and develop a plan of action around what you need to do, how it will be done and who will do it. You may also want to consider mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the action taken.

Assessment

Assessment should be an ongoing task that aims to help learners identify their needs for support. The assessment should lead to a statement of needs of the learners and should result in an action plan. The action plan should identify the support that is going to be provided and by whom. This will also form the basis of monitoring and review of how well the support provided is overcoming or easing the learning needs of the student.

There is a number of barriers to effectively supporting black and minority ethnic learners. These include:

- Lack of knowledge about the cultures and customs of black and minority ethnic communities
- Lack of knowledge (teachers, support staff managers) of stereotypical views of black and minority adult learners
- Failure to take into account learners' experience of racism
- Failure to adopt a holistic model of assessment.

Good assessment is dependent on gathering information that describes the needs of black and minority ethnic adult learners and how they would like these to be met. There is a number of people who could be involved in assessing individual learning and needs. It is crucial that learners develop their skills in assessing their own progress positively.

Assessment Different people make assessment judgements. Their different perspectives involve different types of assessment activity and varying degrees of informality	***Tutor assessment*** Plan your teaching in response to your own and learners assessment of curriculum/support and learning needs
External assessment – specialist Provide opportunities for specific needs to be assessed by outside specialist. You may want to engage local black and minority ethnic organisations to help you in assessing the language needs of learners	***Self-assessment – the learner*** Engages black and minority ethnic learners in the development of their own opinions about their curriculum/support and learning needs

Educational provision is informed by values, many of which are promoted by the Government and learning providers. Some are influenced by the values of professionals. It is important, therefore, that professionals are aware of the values they hold as these can influence decisions and action in relation to assessment and curriculum development.

The starting point for development of better assessment practice with black and minority ethnic adults is noting that much of what is generally regarded as good practice in assessment applies equally to black and minority ethnic adults too. Taking time to prepare, understanding the information that is already held and finding suitable venues convenient to the learners, are all steps that are relevant.

Specific relevant steps include:

- Recognising that there are barriers to implementing effective assessment practice with black and minority ethnic adult learners.

- Developing effective communication with black and minority ethnic adult learners
- Being clear about whom you are assessing. Knowing the following information about the learner:
    - Learners' ethnic origin
    - Language they would prefer the assessment to be carried out in
    - Who else should be/could be present at the assessment
    - Allocating sufficient time to conduct the assessment.

There is a range of possible barriers to carrying out assessment with black and minority ethnic adult learners. These include:

- Black and minority ethnic adults' lack of knowledge of educational provision and opportunities
- Practitioners', support staff's and managers' lack of knowledge of the needs of these learners and the limited usefulness of some existing assessment tools, processes and systems
- Their experience of racism.

These barriers can be easily overcome by:

- Taking practical steps (checking out information, assessing prior learning and experience)
- Ensuring that communication is effective
- Developing the knowledge base of practitioners, support staff and managers
- Using joint working approaches to planning and development (black agencies/white agencies)
- Looking at the wider educational and training needs of black and minority ethnic adults.

Checklist

- In what ways do units of study and courses employ an 'inclusive' curriculum, i.e. take into account the varied experiences and needs of black and minority ethnic learners?
- Are resources and teaching materials regularly checked for racial bias? If so, how often and by whom?
- In what ways are tutors, support staff and managers encouraged and supported to develop a learning environment free from prejudice, racism, discrimination and harassment?
- How are tutors, support staff and managers encouraged to create a supportive atmosphere where topics of study have been, and contrive to be, dominated by low rates of participation of minority ethnic learners?
- What guidance do staff receive about incorporating a diversity of minority ethnic and cultural perspectives in their teaching?
- Has staff development been organised to explore stereotypes about groups of learners and approaches to curriculum delivery, teaching and learning?

Staff development and organisational change

In the context of the work of the Widening Participation Committee and the report by Helena Kennedy QC, the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council, the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, the Race Relations Act (2000) and the Human Rights Act, staff development should be refocused, having regard to the different situations in which staff operate.

Staff development processes should consider how best to equip staff to facilitate the range of learning and skills that are about empowering individuals to take ownership of their lives and to act collectively in pursuit of change and in defence of rights. Staff need the capacity to engage with the realities of different groups of learners, including:

- those excluded from school and who have never returned to education since that time
- those in prison and seeking rehabilitation through self-development programmes, through paid employment and work in the community
- those returning to study or seeking to continue to pursue learning having been permanently excluded or failed by the school system
- those seeking to rebuild their lives having escaped war, political and religious persecution and other traumatising experiences in their countries of origin.

It is still very much the case that staff development programmes favour full-time staff in 'mainstream' provision, while part-time and out-posted staff (for example, those providing education in prisons) have difficulty accessing staff development opportunities. Organisations will do well to ensure that *all* staff, irrespective of contract or locus of operation, are trained in the implications for practice of new and extended agenda for staff development set by legislative and policy measures. The link between quality on the one hand and staff development on the other cannot be over-emphasised.

Organisations need to know whether or not their services are responsive to the needs and aspirations of black communities. It is important to acknowledge that different black and minority ethnic groups face different issues. Flexibility is vital if appropriate learning services and opportunities are to be provided to all groups.

Good staff development practice

- **A university in the North West of England, through its staff training and development unit, provides a number of mandatory training courses for staff, including cultural diversity and managing diversity in recruitment.**
- **At the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea all staff undergo some form of staff development and training. Staff development programmes are also targeted at staff based**

in the voluntary sector whom the organisation has a partnership agreement or funding arrangement with. The cost of staff development is covered by each business group. All training provided is linked to individual personal development plans or the department action plan. The training is therefore linked to the needs of the organisation. Every member of staff undertakes a performance review session with their immediate line manager. As a result of this meeting a personal development plan is completed which identifies staff training needs. This is agreed by the individual and the manager and then passed onto the training section which then collates the information and uses it as a basis for monitoring take-up of training. (Thanks to Yetunde Ode-Martins for this information.)

- Staff development and training at ELIMU in Liverpool is designed in such a way that it influences both practice and policy. It is supported and guided by Local Education Authority staff. Stress management training is also integral to the staff development process and ensures a period of respite for staff working with learners who have behavioural issues. Staff receive training on how to develop coping strategies when dealing with disaffected young people. Some staff interviewed as part of the study said that they felt that they we inadequately prepared for working with diverse groups, in particular, refugees. Staff feel that training in this area is of significant importance to them.

- A programme leader at a local education authority in Lancashire emphasised the need for staff development and awareness training. The programme leader relayed stories of staff within the organisation using racist behaviour and language about refugees. One of these stories relates to a member of staff redirecting a white student to another class even though they had been assessed for a particular IT class. The reason that was given to the student is that there were too many refugee students in that class and as the student was white he would not want to be classed as being stupid or thick. In another example, when a black teacher went to the centre for an interview for a teaching job. On arrival he reported to the reception where he was directed to an English as a Second Language class along with other students. At another centre of this organisation students enrolled for courses by shouting their details though a 'slatted' glass opening in full view and earshot of all students, visitors and contractors. Information about students' personal and private lives is openly discussed, information such as their refugee status, benefits, family and home life is given in earshot of everyone. Some staff find this totally unacceptable whilst others feel it appropriate to allow people to pass on information in this undignified fashion. When asked what happened when there was a long queue the receptionist replied, 'we look for all refugees and foreigners in the queue and send them up to a room to complete a form, this is quicker because they can't speak English and they hold the queue up'.

The process of selecting people by colour or nationality for different treatment, based on their race and origin, is discriminatory and is a form of institutional racism. It follows that if people have difficulty with speaking English they may have even greater difficulties with reading and writing in English. The process of leading them off into another room to 'form-fill' is purely a delaying tactic until the queues are reduced. This is not a satisfactory process: wittingly or unwittingly staff are being racist and subjecting learners to racial discrimination.

Staff in this instance need to go through a process of training and awareness-raising around equal opportunity and race equality. Not only is it a moral responsibility to treat people with respect and dignity but also it is unlawful to behave in this way. The organisation is also at fault here. By not taking action it is colluding with discriminatory practices and by not offering staff development to support staff to work more effectively with new and different groups of learners it is legally responsible for any consequences arising from complaints or actions taken by learners, visitors or staff.

Staff development is not just about training and awareness; it is about changing attitudes, behaviour and practice. It is important to ask what success will look like at the end of the process.

One organisation asked an outside consultant to audit its practice on equal opportunities. The consultant met with the person responsible for equal opportunities and between them they agreed an outcome for the audit. It was agreed that at the end of the audit that they would have information to influence future decisions in the areas of:

- Equal opportunity policy development and implementation
- Frontline staff deployment
- Staff and student recruitment
- Curriculum resources and materials
- Information, publicity and marketing
- Organisational image and profile.

The audit conducted was based on this approach and looked very closely at all aspects agreed with the organisation. Outcomes of the audit are not yet known but the interim report suggests that there is a need for a planned and tailored agenda of staff development in particular around issues of equality of opportunity linked to access, curriculum offer and progression; race equality; and the impact of curriculum design, development and delivery when working with a diverse range of students.

The key to credible and effective audit is the quality of evidence gathered. In the auditing of a policy for equality, the review should take two dimensions into account: the quality of the approach of the organisation and the frequency and effectiveness of its practice in reality. This means that such an audit should not just be conducted as a desk exercise. Generally speaking, there are three groups or types of evidence to be gathered:

- documentary evidence – literally reflected in documents
- perception evidence – evidence of people's opinion of how the policy works in practice
- experiential evidence – direct evidence of events or activities that are results of the policy.

Staff development does not have to be a classroom-based activity. Most organisations visited as part of producing this pack are delivering on-the-job staff development and training in working more effectively with black and minority ethnic groups. A fundamental element of the training includes dialogue and discussion around issues of discrimination, inequality and the impact of these on the learner, the organisation and the wider community.

One organisation asked its staff teams to meet to discuss equality issues in relation to themselves as staff, to learners and to curriculum materials and resources. This offered staff an opportunity to begin to air their problems together and to begin to identify solutions. Some organisations are looking at these areas as a matter of course and are further ahead in their development of changing practice.

Examples of good practice

- A university in Yorkshire has developed a centre to provide reference materials on equal opportunities matters (in the curriculum, for recruitment and selection, legal issues, and so on) for all people using the services of the university.
- An Adult Education Service in the South of England works closely with NATECLA to campaign for change in relation to national examination materials.
- An Adult Education Service in Kent holds regular formal tutor meetings to evaluate and update culturally-appropriate learning resources and materials. The review of the resources stems from the students' six-monthly review.
  - Tutors collectively identify materials that are no longer appropriate or new materials that are needed;
  - they discuss and showcase materials amongst the teams;
  - in-service training supports material/resource evaluation and ensures that materials are anti-racist; and
  - tutors also evaluate examination papers (some of which have been found to be Eurocentric) that may exclude learners from taking or performing well in their exams.
- An FE College's commitment to adult and community learning has encouraged them to put on staff development and training for mainstream college staff who have never worked in a community setting. The training consist of elements such as:
  - Getting to know your learners – who are they? what are their needs? what issues, problems or contributions do they bring with them?
  - Skills needed by a community-based tutor
  - Utilising other expertise in the local community to enhance the work that you do
  - Supporting learners to progress onto mainstream programmes
  - Evidencing and assessing distance travelled in unconventional ways
  - Sharing practice – community tutors and mainstream college tutors working together.
- Another organisation runs a classroom assistant course in the local community for volunteers and existing classroom assistants without qualifications. A significant element of the course is a school placement. Although the learners that staff will be supporting are adults, the placement in the school is vital as the mix of the school pupils is rich and diverse. College and LEA staff gain experience from working in a multi-racial environment and have access to a range of learners they would otherwise not encounter.
- An organisation in the Midlands has arranged for all staff to undertake basic equal opportunities training. Staff with training and delivery skills are now training as trainers to induct new staff within the organisation about the organisation's practices and procedures in relation to equality of opportunity within its work.

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- **Several FE college and universities have joined a local network which supports white staff in teaching black and minority ethnic learners. The network meets twice a year and provides training seminars and guest speakers to look at race issues within teaching and learning at other times of the year. The organisations feel that the staff development they receive as part of this network supports them in the classroom and in all they do in relation to work with black and minority ethnic learners. The cost of membership to the network is £50.00 per year for the organisation and for this they receive a newsletter which supports their learning, two yearly meetings, training seminars in areas of work they request and support, advice and guidance on a regular basis.**

There is a need for staff development and training for black and minority ethnic staff within organisations too. Too often these staff are excluded from staff development and training because of their part-time or short contract status or because of deliberate discrimination. Training is critical in the efforts to remove existing barriers to employment above low-paid and manual work. Black and minority ethnic staff at all levels need to be able to see clear progression routes beyond positions of tutor, classroom assistant, support worker, community interpreter and project worker. We need black and minority ethnic people in key posts in all our institutions and at all levels, not least as teachers in our schools, as probation workers, as policy-makers and managers.

Confronting and challenging organisational practices in adult education is central to anti-oppressive practice. Having support networks and some strength in numbers is important – above all we need to develop channels for the black and minority ethnic voices to be heard and responded to with a black and minority ethnic perspective. The greatest challenge is the lack of black and minority ethnic perspective in the largely white perspective of managers and policy-makers who run education provision. They rely on the support and voice of a few community representatives from black and minority ethnic communities. This has to change if we are to make a difference. The real challenge is to develop the mechanisms to empower and enable black and minority ethnic learners to communicate their concerns clearly and to remain courageous in the face of seemingly overwhelming white perspectives. This work can be exhausting and isolating at times, but we must maintain the momentum and devise strategies which will not leave black and minority ethnic learners feeling betrayed or marginalised.

In developing this section on staff development and organisational change a number of organisations was asked for case studies that would highlight the benefits of change in practice or the need for change. The piece below came as a response to the call for evidence of good and poor practice. It has been adapted for the purpose of the publication.

An organisation in the Northwest of England where there are currently national issues around racism and inequality tells about its need to change its practice to begin to respond more positively to the educational needs of black and minority ethnic learners.

> It is four years since a series of anti-racist training workshops were led by Stella Dadzie for adult education staff in this Service. Since the training no anti-racist policies have been developed and no strategies for monitoring oppressive practice were agreed or developed as a result of this training. Senior Managers have been asked to include a black and minority ethnic perspective in the Best Value monitoring in our Service and we await developments from this.
>
> Inclusive learning strategies have invited some staff to consider and implement ways of making black and minority ethnic people feel included in some buildings across the Service. This needs to be audited from a black and minority ethnic learner perspective as more than a year has

passed since that consultation took place. There are no black and minority ethnic administrative staff or caretakers in the Service. The only bi-lingual and multi-lingual staff are in the EAL and Languages curriculum areas, with the exception of one or two dressmaking tutors. White 'gate keeping' is a daily hazard for black and minority ethnic staff and learners. Some individual incidents are reported and challenged, but I suspect that, as in the wider community, a sense of hopelessness prevails, which it is our duty to address urgently and start with working on our own white awareness.

A black and minority ethnic learners' forum, supported by appropriate staffing, might be a way forward within the Service. This would need high profile support from Senior Management and officers who should welcome the resource of the black and minority ethnic perspective, in the struggle against marginalisation.

Best Value and Inclusive Learning are only two of the national and local initiatives which look at organisational practices, but whether they go any way towards the removal of discriminatory practices depends on the knowledge and awareness of those involved in monitoring race issues and inequality.

Any anti-racist or equal opportunities policy which does exist is only worth its salt if it is implemented and monitored with integrity and accountability from a race, age, disability and gender perspective. These policies are not devised and owned by the people it serves to protect and support, but by white people, able-bodied people and others with a power-role and an investment in keeping that role. This is the size of the organisational practices to be addressed within education in our town and which manages to marginalise black and minority ethnic people from the cradle onwards. Lifelong learning will not become a reality for black and minority ethnic people until the skills and contributions of black and minority ethnic people are respected and acknowledged as a real and valuable resource in education.

Responsibility for policies should lie with everyone. A top-down white policy with no identified monitoring procedures is the colour-blind reinforcement of discrimination.

It is important that equal opportunities practices should not be seen as separate from staff development issues, organisational issues and curriculum issues. It is easy to look at the points made by the writer below and want to separate out the equal opportunity issues within the text. Because they are integral to what is being said, they have not been deleted from the text. The writer continues to tell us about the service in which they work and to point out the inequalities and good practice elements of their organisation's practice.

A good practice example

Initial teacher training/staff development

Recent tutor training for C & G 7307 Stage 1 demonstrated clearly the untapped resources available to Oldham within its black and minority ethnic people. Whilst anti-oppressive strategies are at the heart of this training, the internalisation of oppression and the support needed to realise and to work through this came to light in tutorial sessions. Reflecting on your own practice for white English-speaking practitioners is one thing, but using the painful experiences of prior education for black and minority ethnic staff to deliver with strength and conviction requires a singular courage and determination in a minority situation within this Service.

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This staff development course was set up with one session of taught delivery and one session of ICT workshop and tutorial access. The trainer facilitated the tutorials and the ICT tutor was a mentor to the extent that she had recently completed the course herself.

A mixed group, with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles, it included an Imam from a local mosque, others with second degrees in their first language, some progressing from language support work and from volunteer work and some working in other areas like health, social services or with private training agencies. Subject skills included philosophy, childcare, dressmaking, dentistry, ICT and English.

A clear course outline, assignment briefings and deadlines, assess to resources and equipment and supportive, pre-planned placements, gave a clear route map to learners who were often knitting this staff development into the busy framework of their lives and other working demands, besides, for some, learning in a second language.

Initial assessment and self-identified support needs were monitored through individual tutorials. Assignments could be drafted and discussed and re-presented using ICT if chosen.

It is significant that all assignments and submission of portfolios met each deadline throughout the course. Commitment and perseverance allowed the initial anxiety to become tempered with rising to challenges and to participation in interactive learning. The facilitation of groupwork and discussion allowed learners to cross boundaries which were new to them and to take risks, to ask questions of each other, to challenge each other and to disclose information to others. The rewards were great. Mutual support and ownership of learning abounded. It was a journey travelled in inspiring company.

These black and minority ethnic people are now mentors for future staff development and, hopefully, potential facilitators themselves. They were justly proud to receive the recognition of Adult Learners' Awards during Adult Learners' Week. The evidence of their work is available in their portfolios and in their teaching within this Service. Two participants have since been offered HE places and one has been successful in a Community Development application.

Staff development for volunteers includes C & G 9282/3/4 and other interested staff are invited to join. With a focus on anti-oppressive strategies in 9284 and with one-to-one tutorial support, this course allows, over a shorter timescale, a glimpse of the reflective practitioner basis to sound delivery to black and minority ethnic learners. Supportive, well-planned placements with access to resources and equipment and a sure knowledge of the value of volunteers to the life of the learners make some inroads to building dialogue and mutual understanding.

Close links exist with The Community Work Unit in the University of Manchester. This department focuses on giving access to HE to marginalised black and minority ethnic people and is a positive progression route for learners wishing to move into Community and Youth Work studies. Working as an assessor and sometimes as a supervisor for work practice means the trainer can support the building of important inter-community networks between voluntary agencies and activists. Staff from this service are now progressing into Youth Offending teams, work with young people in public care, co-ordinating local black and minority ethnic community centres, linking with police and voluntary agencies on domestic violence, community development posts and developing work to support lesbian and gay young people and their families.

This work is supported by the Deputy Head of Service and by a Staff Development Officer at senior management level and tribute should be paid to them for their insight. Officers are

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aware of the economic value of black and minority ethnic learners to this town in terms of the funding which is likely to become available. Identifying and responding appropriately to the needs of the local black and minority ethnic communities should be high on their agenda. Staff development at that level might lend more insight and the courage to open routes to employment at these levels for black and minority ethnic learners who have something to say, much to offer and very few channels within the town for their voices to be heard.

Black and minority ethnic issues in this Service are reported to the Deputy Head of Service in supervision, in interim reports or at Curriculum meetings through minutes. These invariably consist of challenges to existing organisational practices, for example, to the planned all-white team reporting on Best Value; to the system which produces Adult Learner certificates at senior management level with most of the names of black and minority ethnic learners incorrectly produced; to the lack of regard for the appointment of a black and minority ethnic Community Development Worker and to the lack of black and minority ethnic perspective in the recruitment and selection of staff.

One strategy which has served to break down barriers has been the removal of tuition and registration fees for the past two years. Another has been the removal of elitist subject qualification requirements (e.g. degree in English HE) and the exploration of prior learning, skills, experience and personal qualities with the black and minority ethnic applicant. These serve as the basis for further development and study whilst in post and link with the rights of any other mature learner applying for jobs. The advertisement of posts is now supported and targeted within the black and minority ethnic communities and agencies, using first language and offering the chance to talk over the post and its requirements prior to applying. Hopefully, the new teacher training standards will have a black and minority ethnic perspective built into them.

The black and minority ethnic learner is still marginalised within this Service and perhaps the re-structuring planned for this year will bring new opportunities. There would be a logical development for the recruitment of black and minority ethnic staff into all curriculum areas — the next great challenge.

Many black and minority ethnic women apply for work in the crèches run by this Service. They too are marginalised by a white perspective on this work, which is reflected in the wider Early Years structures and in the town generally. Managers in the Service need to address the need for a black and minority ethnic perspective in taking childcare work and childcare training forward – to link with the plethora of work opportunities which are beginning to show as a glaring need in Oldham. The recruitment and selection systems need to be scrutinised - for training and for posts, and this black and minority ethnic requirement should be across agencies.

The dearth of teachers across the country is echoed in Oldham where there is a dearth of black and minority ethnic teachers. Black and minority ethnic adult learners can see no clear local route which spells out a welcome to them. One black and minority ethnic learner – a Home School Liaison Worker for the past 11 years, is delighted to have gained a place in teacher training. She has three young children and will have to travel to Liverpool one day a week for the next six years to achieve her goal. The local authority has agreed to fund four places like this from next year. Yet our town is on the edge of a leading university city! Where is the black and minority ethnic perspective in this? Who consulted with whom in the local authority?

Staff development is a fundamental part of effectively reaching, teaching, supporting and widening participation for black and minority ethnic people. At the heart of all we do to provide staff development and training activities for staff is equality of opportunity and, within that, quality. It is important that we ensure that staff working in our organisations are well trained, experienced and equipped to work in the multi-racial, multi-cultural learning environments that they find themselves in. Staff without good quality development and training should not be expected to teach learners with whom they have little or no experience of working. There is a number of different approaches highlighted here about developing and delivering staff development and training. These are only a few of the ways possible to help staff to acquire new skills. It is worth investing in in-house staff development and training delivered in a variety of ways to meet the learning styles of staff within the organisation.

What are equal opportunities all about?

'Equal opportunities' can be considered to be both an organisational process and a culture. It is an over-arching term used in addressing the barriers that prevent full social, economic and political participation due to a person's race, disability, age or gender. Equal opportunities should not be confused with treating everyone the same. It calls for a careful assessment of the practical needs of identified groups and of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation to meet them. (*Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities*, Learning and Skills Development Agency, 2001)

The majority of providers in post-16 education in the UK recognise that one strength of their organisations lies in having a diverse student and staff population and workforce. Having a strong student population and workforce that reflects the type of people who live in the area means that education providers can begin to develop their services better using the knowledge and skills of people representative of the local population.

Education providers have a duty to promote equality of opportunity. Moreover, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on public bodies to promote racial equality and combat institutional discrimination. Learning providers must be able to identify and challenge discriminatory practices. There must be an acceptance that equal opportunity is the responsibility of us all, and that if we are to operate fair and just systems in our organisations we each need to take personal responsibility for endorsing and implementing equal opportunities policies and practices.

Taking these issues into account, we need to consider seriously which actions are taken to widen participation in learning for black and minority ethnic people. Race and diversity issues can affect how people learn. It is important not only to write the policies but also to put them into practice.

Practising equal opportunities means removing bias from existing policies, procedures and practices, and taking steps to reduce the effects of previous discrimination.

Equal opportunities policies

Organisations have equal opportunity policies that are developed with good intention to provide equal opportunity to all staff and learners and to applicants for employment, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability. They are developed to ensure that no one is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

Making equal opportunities happen

Part of the organisation's commitment is ensuring that:

- everyone knows what equal opportunities is about
- everyone understands their responsibilities in making equal opportunities happen.

Obstacles to equal opportunities

There are some attitudes and behaviours which sometimes prevent us from applying equal opportunities in what we do. Prejudice is one such attitude. This occurs where a judgement or decision is made on the basis of little or no relevant factual information. Often we make judgements and decisions where it is not possible to be in possession of all the relevant facts.

In many situations where information is available and we choose to ignore it or not seek it in the first place, prejudice can become 'dangerous' as we often use stereotypes to fill the gaps in our knowledge. It is vitally important that we develop an institutional ethos that supports staff and learners to raise their awareness about equal opportunities and to change their practices and attitudes.

Good practice examples

Some organisations are already beginning to look at their image in the community and are seeking help to change their practices. One such organisation in the North of England is Oldham College. The College began to look at its staffing profile and curriculum two years ago. Realising that the journey towards equal opportunity is long hard and complex, in a couple of consultants were brought in to help them.

> The focus of the work on the equal opportunities handbook developed by the College was in the College's vision, mission and values. The College established a working party of committed enthusiastic college staff. It included staff from the human resource unit, the quality team, the educational support unit and the student guidance and support team.
>
> This team of staff put the equal opportunities handbook together and, after it was developed, ran a series of staff development and training activities to help staff to access the information within the handbook. The handbook covers topics such as equal opportunities in the curriculum and equal opportunities in practice. All staff in the College have gone through the training and new staff joining the College receive a copy of the manual, and is introduced to it as part of an 'Equal Opportunities in Action' staff development workshop within the first three months of their employment.

Another organisation in Kent set up a working group covering all areas of the activities of the service to integrate equality into operational plans. The process for this included the creating of management information and systems that gather all appropriate data about black and minority ethnic learners. These systems were supported by information from organisational audits and self-assessment reports. Within the working group there was one individual responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the organisation's equal opportunities performance against set targets. A crucial part of the process was the identification through organisational audit and learner consultation across all programme areas. The focus of the audit was on key equality issues, barriers and strategies for positive change within the organisation.

A London-based further education college, having developed its equal opportunities policy and action plan for implementation, aimed to:

- assess the impact of the policy on existing and potential learners, in particular identifying and re-shaping those aspects of provision which would disadvantage black and minority ethnic learners
- set equality targets and performance indicators within their operational plans to tackle under-representation, under-achievement of black and minority ethnic learners.

Organisations who realise that there is clear and indisputable evidence that certain groups and individuals are discriminated against in their institutions must take action immediately to combat this. One organisation which recently asked NIACE for help with dealing with overt and covert institutional racism has started to identify where the problems lie and who is responsible. The organisation also recognises that it is at fault and has started a process of development work around equality of opportunity. The designated person responsible for equal opportunities has the following remit in this role:

- to conduct an equality audit of the learner and staffing profile and all current and proposed policies and practices
- to secure the commitment of senior management in developing an equal opportunities policy
- to communicate the policy to all staff and potential employees
- to monitor to ensure that the policy is working in practice and prepare an annual report on progress
- to train all staff on the requirements of the policy and the values and ethos of the organisation in relation to equal opportunities
- to ensure that equal opportunities and diversity become an integral part of the organisation's culture
- to support the organisation by ensuring that teachers, support staff and managers are equipped with all the key information needed to be a champion of equality and diversity best practice.
- to help the organisation achieve the success that such policies can deliver
- to offer advice and guidance on the practical implementation of equality and diversity
- to identify and introduce the organisation to the strategic issues of equality and develop mechanisms for reviewing current policies.

The LEA is working closely with a consultant to help establish the systems and to offer support and advice to the member of staff responsible for ensuring that the organisation 'champions' best practice in equal opportunities.

Any organisation that is committed to equal opportunity will, in the long run, have a diverse student and staff population across all subject areas and at all levels of study. As providers of learning we have to challenge inequitable practices and discrimination in our organisations. Several organisations visited as a part of developing this good practice guide are well ahead in developing good equality practice but realise that they still have a long way to go.

Commendable practices include

- developing learning programmes and materials which take into account the different characteristics of learners from different cultural and social backgrounds.
- ensuring providers and employers promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to widen participation
- benchmarking the equal opportunities performance of different curriculum areas on race equality and equal opportunities.

Conclusion

This good practice guide focuses on the population most affected by the 'normal' workings of providers of learning opportunities for black adult learners and on what those institutions and their staff need to do in order to put an end to the poor experience that black people have had of the UK's educational system for the last half century.

The guide reminds the education establishment that, as the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry concluded, institutional racism is not the preserve of the (Metropolitan) police and that it is leaders and managers who must take the responsibility for ensuring that it is eradicated from their institutions. The guide focuses upon the myriad ways in which black adult learners are marginalised even within institutions who genuinely believe they are doing a wonderful job in providing for their learning community overall. It points to the fact that by the time adult learners access Post-16 provision, many would have had negative experiences of schooling and/or of employment after school. The responsibility that places on the Post-16 sector to be truly responsive to people's needs (including the need to be skilled for jobs available and projected in the labour market), and to take their experiences into account in planning provision for them, is given due emphasis in the guide.

The outer coating of 'Equal Opportunities', which too often shrouds the real state of things inside the workings of the organisation, is stripped bare, and managers, staff and students are given concrete suggestions as to how to grow an equality culture and transform the taken-for-granted 'consensus' within the organisation.

In the post-Stephen Lawrence Inquiry era and in the light of the Human Rights Act 2000, the Race Relations Act 2000 (1976 Amended) and the duty placed upon all public bodies and employers to uphold people's human rights and to promote race equality, no education provider, from day nursery to university, can afford not to study this guide and apply its good practice recommendations.

The guide presents an overview of a body of research on the educational experiences of black and minority ethnic adult learners, as users of educational services. It also examines policies and practices developed and implemented by educational providers to address racial equality and discrimination

In analysing the responses to the NIACE good practice survey questionnaires, particular attention has been paid to changing practice, the fundamental changes in planning, implementation and performance monitoring, to address issues of under-representation and under-achievement of the target group.

One of the key messages from the survey is that learning providers can overcome institutional racism by re-thinking their approaches to providing information, advice and guidance, and in developing and delivering the curriculum.

The guide clearly identifies and recognises that in today's society some black and minority ethnic adults are experiencing greater educational opportunities. On the whole the UK education system employs a raft of highly-talented, experienced and qualified staff. Despite this and other related facts, there are still areas of the country where education providers are failing to meet the specific learning needs of black and minority ethnic adults.

The study demonstrates that genuine attempts are being made to improve access to information, provision and learning outcomes for black and minority ethnic adults. However, it is also evident that funding and services for this target group are short-term, mainly due to time-limited funding or departure of 'learning champions'.

Learning providers are slowly beginning to recognise the need for a shift from the concept of 'average learner' to one that understands and recognises the diversity within the student population as a whole. The impact of ethnicity on need and the cost of providing high quality learning experiences are being taken into account within some organisations' reviews and strategic and operational plans.

This must now be matched with appropriate and effective policy appraisal mechanisms and an evaluation strategy for identifying whether or not learning providers equal opportunity or race equality policies specifically meet the needs of this target group.

Involving black and minority ethnic people in planning and reviewing curriculum and educational services through consultation and learners surveys. Ensuring that all policy makers are trained to integrate race equality issues in the policy areas for which they have a responsibility has to be of the highest importance for learning providers.

An examination of the issues reinforces the view that institutional racism exists in educational establishments. While there are grounds for some optimism, complacency would be misplaced as much remains to be done.

Resources

School exclusions

The impact of exclusion of African-Caribbean boys

African Caribbean boys are up to eight times more likely to be excluded from school than their white counterparts

OFSTED is embroiled in another row after declaring racism is not to blame for the disproportionate number of black students who are excluded from schools, a claim that flies in the face of prevailing wisdom.

The schools inspection agency's latest report 'Improving Attendance and Behaviour In Secondary Schools' claims there is no conclusive link between racism and the high number of black exclusions.

OFSTED was immediately attacked by black education experts, who accused the organisation of a 'head in the sand' attitude. The claim contradicts evidence that African Caribbean boys are up to eight times more likely to be kicked out of school than their white counterparts.

Slammed

OFSTED, conclusions come at the same time as a study of schools in Birmingham highlights plummeting performance of black pupils. The study, by Professor Ted Wragg of Exeter University, shows that African Caribbean children begin school life as the highest achievers, but sink to the bottom of the class by the time they leave school.

The OFSTED report was slammed by Gloria Hyatt, from the black Liverpool school Elimu Academy. She argued that school inspectors had got themselves into a twist by acknowledging that black boys are expelled in far greater numbers than their white counterparts but refusing to accept this is caused by racism.

Hyatt said: "they are trying to avoid dealing with the problem, this is a head in the sand attitude. There is racism in school, without a shadow of a doubt. The facts speak for themselves but it doesn't surprise me that OFSTED has come out with this because I don't believe they have an adequate awareness of the issues of racism."

OFSTED, however, rejected this criticism. A spokeswoman said, "we cannot draw the straightforward conclusion that racism exists from the information we have, but that is not to say that it is not the case".

She attacked the 'simplistic' views of people who allege racism exists based on individual anecdotes. Asked whether OFSTED planned further research to establish whether racism was to blame for disproportionate exclusions the OFSTED official said it was too soon after the publication of the ' Improving Behaviour and Attendance' report to make such a decision.

The spokeswoman added that it was the responsibility of individual schools to address disproportionate exclusions of black pupils.

Unruly

In January *The Voice* reported on the case of senior OFSTED inspector David Moore, slammed by critics for suggesting 'self confident black boys' would rather die than back down in front of their friends and saying some teachers clearly find the self-confidence of their African-Caribbean boys intimidating and therefore respond to them in a more confrontational and challenging way.

Critics claimed David Moore's comments could lead to stereotyping of black pupils. Graham Lane, chairman of the Local Government Association's education committee, said, 'I do not believe black kids are more unruly than white kids.' It raises the possibility of institutional racism. And in another twist, the *Times Educational Supplement* last week reported on warnings by teachers that they don't have time to implement new anti-racist laws.

'New OFSTED report ignores reality, say critics', Lester Holloway, *The Voice*, 2 March 2001

Equal opportunities practices

One of the most regular equal opportunities issues we address is ensuring that learners do not fall into stereotyped roles which inhibit their opportunities to both play a full role in the team and to explore their own capabilities.

Typical examples of stereotyping in our project

- Middle-aged woman assumes she will be expected to do tea-making and support.
- Older man assumes that's what women (especially of his generation) 'do best'
- Young person assumes they will not be given responsibility
- Older people assume young people not fit for responsibility
- Young people assume older people are 'past it'
- Older people assume knowledge makes them "better" than inexperienced people
- Academically adept people think this indicates other people's ability or intelligence
- Making broad assumptions about people from different socioeconomic and cultural groups.

These are all assumptions, which create largely unwitting divisions not only in a work situation but also in the wider community. The average person just absorbs them from the media, their peers, their family background and so on. Particularly working with older age groups, we need to remind ourselves of the way society stereotyped personal roles during their earlier years, to understand that they are not making their assumptions out of malice but from lifelong habit. Early TV ads with "the little woman" and "hubby". The pseudo-sociology which society trotted out to reinforce class, race and social divisions. They were still in force in my youth in the 1950s - 60s.

Many disadvantaged people have little to hang onto other than their own identity. Higher predator species (such as humans) feel the need to identify "enemies" in order to define "friends", and when they feel threatened by circumstance, humans often respond by applying their fears and insecurities to people they perceive as different. Watch the soaps to see it at work, still reinforcing divisive postures. Not just a racialist attack on a black man in *Brookside*, but the unsubtle cutting people down to size and passing judgment on them which is the mainstay of conversation in every soap opera pub.

The simple step which goes 75% of the way towards breaking down workplace assumptions which are supporting inequality is to quietly identify them and then functionally overturn them.

- Give the woman a responsibility which lies at the heart of traditional male activity as she has experienced it.
- Make it the men's job to do the tea breaks.
- Find opportunities to give young people real responsibility.
- Identify what the young learners can teach the older ones and vice-versa so they develop respect for each other.
- Move away from literacy issues to put knowledge on a level playing field.

Every day, as the team changes and interacts, small aspects of equality can be identified, tweaked and built into a structure which reflects a commitment to equality of opportunity. This depends on strong, sympathetic management and crucially on effective team-building on a practical rather than theoretical level, to enable everyone to recognise the value of respecting and supporting each other.

- It is also important to offer a wide variety of skill opportunities. If a project has a limited number of activities, it can revert to "training scheme" mode, where some become 'more equal than others' because they are better at those activities.
- In our experience, sitting down deliberately to talk about equality issues in isolation from the work of the project is not a successful approach for adult learners. We would not run supervisor-led discussions on these issues. The issues concerned get a good airing as the learners discuss their work and team achievements together, in a more inclusive context.
- Adults who feel that the way they were brought up is under attack can feel that established ground is being chopped out from beneath them, and tend to respond by stopping attending. If someone is an outright bigot that is often the best solution for the interests of the team as a whole, but we have rarely encountered malicious bigotry, just degrees of misunderstanding of other people's positions.
- Most adults have a fairly robust relationship with their gender, so this is an area where the Project can be more robust itself. We have found there is nothing so effective at dissuading a bloke from saying "here love, I'll do that" than a hoot of derision from the rest of the team. But it must be from the team, which leads us back to the importance of effective leadership and developing team identity.
- As the Team developed, the strength of team identity it gave the learners - and the variety of people in the team - led to wider changes in individual approaches to making assumptions about other people's roles. This happened for reasons which it is quite easy to identify in retrospect, but which were essentially spin-offs from the structure of the project rather than pre-determined policies.
- Learners also absorbed a new relationship to diversity. Those who had been inclined to equate subconsciously "difference" with "threat" on the whole ceased to, because the Team has been so diverse that learners came into contact with people they would not otherwise have met, and formed close social and working relationships with them. The Team structure itself – forged round the Crew Identity – substituted confidence and support for insecurity, so that individuals did not feel the need to adopt "threatened" thought modes. They knew who they were, they were all part of a new group, and other groups' identities became interesting rather than worrying.
- The Team also included a number of learners whose approach to life had always been deliberately inclusive and committedly non-stereotypical, and the team structure enabled them to pass on these life skills to other team members in much the same way as practical skills were passed around the group.

We think that diversity within a group is the most important factor in spreading inclusive attitudes out into the learners' wider interactions with the community, supported by a strong team structure and effective management.

Susan Hanley-Place MBE

Faith and spirituality

This is a useful resource on the role of faith and spirituality in black and minority ethnic people's lives and the educational implications of this for some groups and individuals.

Taking account of religious beliefs should be important to all who provide education and training. Faith and spirituality play an important role in a great many people's lives, providing a range of functions:

- Moral guidance
- Emotional support
- Support networks
- Sense of identity

For many black and minority ethnic people all of these apply, but in addition their faith may have been fundamental in supporting them through their experiences of racism and may also be bound up with cultural traditions and ethnic identity.

The following table gives some indication of the size of the main faith communities in terms of community membership rather than active membership.

Buddhists	30,000-130,000
Christians	40,000,000
Hindus	400,000-550,000
Jains	25,000-30,000
Jews	300,000
Muslims	1,000,000-1,500,000
Sikhs	350,000-500,000

Source: Weller (1997)

Surveying the local community

If you want to collect information on the range of religious faith groups in your local area and what they do, you could consider the following:

- Carrying out a small-scale survey of places of worship, to provide evidence of the range of local religious groups
- It is worth finding out about the range of services provided by each religious group so that your organisation is able to link learners up to them and develop a partnership approach with community and religious groups.

Developing good practice

Practitioners, managers and support staff, regardless of their own personal faith are capable of responding to diverse spiritual needs. However, many staff may need to learn how to support learners and about the educational implications of faith and spirituality on curriculum development, planning and delivery.

Think about answers to the following questions and the issues that arise for you as a result.

- Do you make a point of finding out the religious beliefs of any of the learners you work with, provide learning opportunities or develop curriculum for?
- Do you try to find out the educational implications of and or basic information about a particular religion if you have learners on your programmes with this faith?
- How do you enable black and minority ethnic people with whom you work , or for whom you provide learning opportunities or develop curriculum to practise their faith?
- Do you know what the different faiths are as practised in your area?

These questions should help you to identify what some of the issues are for your organisation and where there are gaps in your knowledge or service. At an organisational level, management issues such as monitoring, programme development, consultation and training need to be looked at to ensure that where possible the religious needs of learners are being met.

For practitioners and support staff, the issues are filling gaps in your knowledge, and changing practice to emphasise respect, flexibility and understanding.

Examples of good practice for Asian communities in religious observance would include:

- Gathering advice from the local Asian communities and mosque to ensure that facilities are appropriately developed to cater for the educational needs of these communities
- Preparing food appropriately using halal meat or providing vegetarian dishes
- Allocating a room to be used for prayer needs
- Observance and celebration of religious festivals.

Creating organisational change

What action can learning providers, their managers and practitioners take to progress equality in education and training for black learners? To answer this question the black adults at the learners' forum drew up a checklist for organisations, managers and practitioners.

Organisations	Managers	Practitioners
Develop EO policies	Lead the EO process	Implement the EO action plan
Set clear parameters and goals for race equality Develop systems and procedures for dealing with discrimination and harassment issues.	Monitor and implement the EO policy and action plan Review systems and procedures and demonstrate accountability for implementing them	Plan and deliver learning that acknowledges diversity and difference Record action and outcomes Establish reliable database
Ensure that there is adequate representation of black people on the staff and governing bodies.	Take responsibility for instituting effective procedures to recruit and support black staff and Governors Monitor the impact, progress and achievement of the EO policy	Learn about the lives and cultural differences of their learners
Ensure fair recruitment and selection and provide safe and culturally-appropriate learning environments and facilities.	Lead by example Challenge racism Support staff in their efforts to understand and implement EO strategies and plans Plan for changing practices, staff behaviour and attitudes	Review learning materials and resources for bias
	Provide funding to develop culturally sensitive and appropriate learning materials and resources	Work with black community organisations and professionals to plan and deliver learning

This list is not prescriptive and should be used only as a starting point for discussion.

Equal opportunities in the workplace

This questionnaire is designed to get you thinking about your role and the role of the organisation in relation to equal opportunities in the workplace.

Which things on the list below are aspects of your job?	Describe ways in which equal opportunities play a part in your job role	What could you do to further promote and raise awareness of equal opportunities?	Record here any action that you will take, having thought through this process
Providing verbal/ written information for learners			
Inclusive learning			
Tutorials			
Teaching groups of learners			
Producing the student charter Producing student/ staff handbooks			
Selecting books/ course material			
Staff development and training			
Front desk responsibilities			
Enrolment of students			
Supporting learners			

Checklist for access

- Is the organisation's view of and commitment to equal opportunities conveyed to learners and prospective applicants?
- Is information offered in alternative formats, via telephone, tape, video, and languages other than English?
- Are learners and prospective applicants informed and made aware of the full range of learning/learner and language support available to them?
- Does the ethos of the organisation reflect a welcoming and open approach to black applicants and existing black learners?
- Does the organisation foster a comfortable learning environment, which clearly values diversity and works towards removing barriers to access for black and minority ethnic learners?
- How are recruitment and selection procedures made consistent with the organisation's equal opportunities policy?
- What measures are taken to monitor the effect of applying these procedures?
- Are there specific references to recruitment and entry (widening participation to encourage more and different learners from black and minority ethnic origins) in the policies?
- Are those interviewing and selecting learners aware of and have an understanding of the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy, and are they trained to implement it?
- Where such awareness and training does not exist, are steps taken to involve suitably qualified persons from black communities to assist the organisation in that process?
- What arrangements are in place to facilitate access to provision for refugees and asylum seekers?
- How does the organisation ensure that qualifications gained overseas are valued?
- Have policies and positive action to encourage access to traditional subject areas (predominated by white learners), or subjects which tend to attract minority ethnic learners, been discussed/considered?

contd.

- What provision has the organisation made in co-operation with black voluntary and community organisations in the education field to improve access for black and minority ethnic groups?
- During induction sessions, are learners made aware of the organisation's views on and commitment to equal opportunities, the organisation's Code of Practice for racial harassment, and the responsibility they have to support and build an equality culture?

Equal opportunities and the curriculum

To explore the implications of equal opportunities issues within the context of the curriculum

The Government has placed equality firmly on the agenda for education, employment and training. Public organisations have a duty to promote equal opportunities and to build strong, inclusive communities. There is a moral case for striving for equal opportunities. It is a basic human right to be treated with equality and fairness. There is an economic case for equal opportunity too, as everyone's potential can be utilised.

Monitoring

Over the last three years what has been the composition of the groups undertaking your programmes of study? Look at age, ethnicity, gender, declared disability, learning difficulty and other groupings.

Recruitment and publicity

Does the organisation's recruitment material provide sufficient information for learners who are under-represented in your monitoring data?

- Is the format of the publicity inclusive? If yes how do you know, and if no what can you do to change it?
- How does your publicity material relate to people with disabilities/people from different ethnic backgrounds/people of different age groups/people of different gender?
- Is information produced in community languages/Braille/audio tape/video?
- How accessible is the information to a wide range of learners (taking into account basic skills, visual impairments and so on)?
- What information do you publish about support for learners (generic and specific support)?
- Where do you advertise your programmes to ensure that you widen participation?

To ensure that equal opportunities and diversity become an integral part of your organisation's culture conduct an equal opportunities audit across the organisation to get a clearer understanding about what equal opportunities means in practice.

Questions for the organisation's staff and managers:

- Is the organisation's equal opportunities policy effective?
- What purpose does it serve?
- Does it meet the requirements of national, cultural and disability discrimination legislation?
- Does it cover guidance on access to services offered by the organisation?
- What specific aims, values and strategies does the organisation have for promoting equality through the policy?

- How do you measure the progression against the policy action plan?
- How do learners give feedback about how they are affected by the policy?
- How is the equal opportunities policy disseminated to staff and students?
- How does the organisation implement its policy on equal opportunities?
- How does the policy relate to design, delivery and planning of the curriculum?
- What guidance/training do staff receive on equal opportunities issues and implementation?
- What guidance do staff receive on what constitutes or could constitute discrimination, harassment or racism?
- Are there staff within the organisation with responsibility defined in their role and agreed time allocation for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the policy?
- How does the organisation deal with discriminatory practice?
- How often is the policy reviewed and revised and whose responsibility is it?
- What records or other evidence related to implementation and review of equal opportunities does the organisation have?

Evidencing equal opportunities

Please read the statements below and answer yes or no to the statement. If you answer 'yes' please record where your evidence can be found.

- Fair and equitable procedures are operated in relation to the recruitment, selection and promotion of staff and learners
- Procedures ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to admission and assessment of learners
- Teaching, learning and other environments are accessible to all
- Monitoring of these procedures is regularly carried out along with monitoring of the organisation's workforce and learner population.
- Existing procedures are reviewed and examined to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation
- A procedure for resolving complaints of discrimination is developed and communicated to those who may need to use it
- Language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the organisation's equal opportunities policy
- Serious breaches of this policy are dealt with through the disciplinary procedures.

The curriculum should be available to all learners without discrimination

A wide range of experiences needs to be provided to encourage learners to explore, to experiment and to communicate in order to stimulate their interest and lead to the development of skills and knowledge.

All learners should:

- have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- feel a valued member of the learning community
- feel no pressure or threat because of race or ethnic background
- feel secure and safe from physical threat or verbal abuse
- have an environment free from gender bias
- have an environment that supports the development of self-image.

Learning providers should aim to:

- provide books and other learning resources of an unbiased nature on the issues of race, gender, class, stereotypes and language
- include in their planning and work tasks, discussion opportunities and follow-up activities on bias of all kinds
- provide a pastoral system which ensures that all learners know how to get such issues dealt with; any incident giving learners cause for concern should be reported through the systems established for this purpose
- ensure displays are free of stereotype and reflect the cultural diversity of the organisation's population and that of the local community.

Suggested examples of good practice

- Teaching materials should not be stereotypical or discriminatory. New materials should contain positive reference and role models.
- Teachers should have equally high expectations of their students regardless of gender, ethnic or social background. In the classroom/workshops groups should be mixed, reflecting the composition of the student community as far as possible and a climate of co-operation encouraged. Any discriminatory comments should be dealt with at the time of their occurrence and in accordance with the organisation's equal opportunities policies and procedures.
- Staff and managers should be encouraged to question their own attitudes and try to become more aware of their own prejudices. All staff are de facto role models for students and must recognise this and the responsibility it places upon them to lead by example.
- The management of the organisation should establish a structure which promotes positive role models. The organisation should encourage the involvement of the wider community in developing equal opportunities curriculum. Applications for jobs should be encouraged from all members of the community.
- Conditions of employment must be non-discriminatory, e.g having regard to religious customs and practices, including holidays

We should have multicultural perspectives in the curriculum, to help students to question prejudice and develop open-mindedness. In the same way, we should challenge society's attitudes to gender, race, class and sexuality and encourage understanding and respect. Equal opportunities is an integral component of the teaching and learning of all subjects.

The monitoring of certain aspects of equal opportunity policies may be subjective, as a change in attitude, for example, is difficult to quantify. However, departments should monitor their teaching materials and where possible reject those not conforming to the policy. Displays should be checked regularly by managers and staff alike, to ensure that they conform to the policies of the organisation.

How you can address diversity in your classroom?

- Classroom layout – encouraging student interaction
- Provide real, relevant experiences – practical learning experiences/ experiential/ action learning
- Provide opportunities for students from the same and different racial groups to mix – promoting inclusive learning
- Introduce mentoring in class/across classes – valuing/supporting students' experience and skills
- Work collaboratively with tutors from different disciplines internally and externally – mutually beneficial – this can prompt new ideas and disseminate/share good practice as well as increasing and extend opportunities for learning.

The Diversity Quiz

Key questions on equality and diversity

Test how well you know the issues – and develop your thinking. There are eight multiple-choice questions. You can work through them in order or go directly to those that most interest you. For each question there may be more than one applicable answer.

Q1 Why does your organisation want to achieve diversity and/or equality?

A Because it's the law

B They don't

C Because it helps them to make use of all their resources and so makes business sense

D Because it helps them to meet the requirements of a diverse customer base and so makes business sense

E Because diverse teams and ways of working produce diverse perspectives are creative and so give a competitive edge

F Because if they don't they might get caught out and have to pay £50,000 at an industrial tribunal

G Because there are too many do-gooders around these days and/or it's the politically correct thing to do

Q2 What does equality mean to you?

A Equal numbers of men and women at each level of the organisation

B A level playing field – every one has equal opportunity in career development, for example the ability to apply for every job

C Providing equality in services so that they are equally open to all people

D Changing the culture of the organisation so that everyone accepts the benefits of equality and tries to practise it in everything they do

E Managing diversity

F All the above

Q3 What is the difference between equality and diversity?

A None – they are exactly the same

B Equality is about making everyone the same, diversity is about valuing difference

C Diversity covers a wider range of differences than equality does

D Diversity is the latest buzzword for equality. They mean exactly the same

E Diversity is related to organisational needs, equality isn't

Q4 What does diversity cover?

A Gender, race and disability

B The above plus age and sexual orientation

C All differences

Q5 How can equality be achieved in your organisations?

A Appointing an equality officer

B Drawing up a strategy

C Writing a policy

D Changing the culture

E Training

F Telling people not to treat people unequally

G Introducing equality recruitment

H Copying how other organisations have done it

Q6 Who is the best person/s to achieve equality in your organisation?

A An equality officer, who may be at any level in the organisation

B The Chief Executive

C The most senior woman

D The most senior black person

E The most senior gay or lesbian person

F The most senior black lesbian

G It has to happen from the bottom up

H It has to happen from the top down All the people in the organisation

Q7 What is required to bring about diversity?

A A change in people's attitudes

B No change at the individual level

C A change in people's behaviour

D A change in people's awareness

E A change in people's self-awareness and how they impact on others. You can't change people anyway, so why bother?

Q8 What are the biggest barriers to achieving equality or diversity in your or organisation?

A Men

B Women

C Political correctness

D Culture

E Power relations

F Lack of support from the top

Good practice in developing appropriate resources for black and minority ethnic adult learners

The Education Department identified the need for a post of Adult and Community Education Co-ordinator for English as an Additional Language. The purpose of the post was to:

- Provide co-ordination and quality assurance in classes, organised by Luton's community colleges, for adults who use English as an additional language
- Support curriculum and resource development for adults learning English as an additional language
- Provide training for tutors who provide courses for adults learning and using English as an additional language.

On coming into post it was felt that existing resources should be reviewed, and a system for doing this was established. This included developing two checklists which were used as a basis for both reviewing existing resources and producing/purchasing new resources and materials.

Steps to building up the bank of resources

1. Look at the resources already available.
    - Do they meet the needs of second language speakers?
    - Are they culturally appropriate?
    - Is the language level appropriate?
2. Conduct an audit of existing EAL provision.
    - What are these programmes?
    - In what type of learning environment/venue/location is learning taking place?
    - Are there any specific needs as a result of where the programme is placed (eg. Community location)?
    - Consult the tutors and learners as regards to their needs
    - What are the requirements for resources?
    - Provide good visual resources (e.g. visual adult dictionaries)
3. Identify the EAL learners
    - Are they men- or women-only groups or mixed groups?
    - What are their educational needs?
    - What are the educational implications of their backgrounds/culture/religion?
4. Identify the skills necessary for producing learning resources
    - Identify appropriate training courses to meet needs
    - Develop ITC Skills
    - Ensure that presentation is of a high and competitive standard.

5. Identify existing available (quality) resources and outlets
   - Visit reputable outlets (Avanti Books Luton is a local supplier of basic skills and EAL resources/books)
6. Review the resources of the organisation, including home grown books and materials.
7. Identify funding for development and purchase of materials (funding for this work came from the Lifelong Learning Development Standards Fund.
8. Redesign, redevelop, and catalogue materials and resources
9. Work with other tutors in this way to ensure that resources can be distributed evenly and made available in all curriculum areas.
10. Produce information and guidelines on resources and materials such as which groups they are suitable for, what level of ability they are for and where they can be found.

It is too early yet to be able to identify the full benefits of the development and review of the resources. However, learners and tutors have offered the following benefits to date:

- The learners' resources are more appropriate to the work in class. A wider variety of books and materials is available to the learners. They are of a higher quality and better presented.
- The organisation: has helped to ensure quality of provision, staff feel more supported and confident in their delivery of learning as materials support the curriculum better
- Staff feel much more valued.

An essential resource is a tape recorder, to provide training on how to make dialogue on tape and other valuable listening activities. INSET training sessions are valuable to look at and share ideas about effective use of resources and materials. They also support practical activities before using them with learners

This step-by-step guide is by no means exhaustive. However, it has proved very useful to our team in evaluating, developing and presenting materials.

Corrine Ireland
Luton Education Department

Factors tutors should consider when evaluating, developing and selecting suitable learning materials for black and minority ethnic adult learners

- Are they appropriate for use with black and minority ethnic adults?
- Are they Eurocentric, excluding learners from minority ethnic backgrounds?
- Are the contents and examples relevant to black and minority ethnic learners' lives?
- Is the language appropriate, does it stereotype black and minority ethnic learners?
- Is there any bias, or stereotyping, either cultural, religious, sexist or racist?
- Do illustrations and images reflect the make up of the local population and include images of black and minority ethnic people?
- Is the presentation and layout clear and attractive (size of print, legibility, etc)?
- Can it be used effectively by a diverse range of learners?
- Is the overall content culturally sensitive in terms of language, race and gender?

Glossary of terms used in this guide

Throughout the guide a number of particular terms has been used. Some of these have uses in general conversation which are slightly different or commonly misunderstood. The glossary attempts to define how these terms are used in this guide. It is important to demonstrate your own understanding of words and terms used. The glossary of terms has been developed to ensure that you:

- explore your understanding of some of the words and terms used in developing better practice
- look at commonly-used definitions of these words and terms
- understand that the meaning of words and terms can change over time and that what is acceptable now may change in the future.

Black

Black is a term used to refer to those who, because of their race, colour or ethnic origin, are visually and identifiably different from white people, mainly of European heritage. Identification as 'black' constitutes a declaration of political pride in the way that 'coloured' does not.

Cultural racism see 'Racism'

Cultural stereotyping

"Society's shared meanings, assumptions and 'norms' perpetuate implicit and explicit values that bind institutions and individuals. In an oppressive society, the cultural perspectives of the dominant group are imposed on institutions by individuals and on individuals by institutions." Cultural aspects such as shared meanings, assumptions and norms, can be seen to operate in:

- humour: stereotypical jokes ("you have to be black, wheel-chair bound and lesbian"), L. Christie's "lunch box", caricatures of "black dress codes", mimicking of languages and dialects within sections of the black population
- stereotypes and myths: rhythmic, "genetically designed" dancers, brilliant at sports/innately low intellectual capacity, highly sexed, drug heads, "they all love cricket with a passion, it's in their blood"
- language: "immigrant", "coloured", "them"/"these people", "pakis", "chinkies", "coons", "wogs", "darkies", "niggers", "black bastard"
- advertising: caricature of life in mainly black societies (either exotic, sun-bathed locations with "happy go lucky" blacks or blacks in the midst of poverty, squalor and disas-

ter), sporting and rhythmic roles, exaggerated enjoyment of life (food, drink, dancing, music, fashion, sun and beaches)

- science: genetics and "race," the "race and IQ" debate, cultural behaviours as genetically determined

Culture

Culture refers to shared beliefs, values, rituals, symbols and practices that determine a group of individuals' perceptions of themselves and the world in which they live. It is expressed, for example, through dress, language, food, religion, custom, folklore and tradition.

Ethnocentrism

This means the practice of viewing the world from the perspective of a particular ethnic group, often with the assumption that the values, beliefs and achievements of that group are superior to those of other ethnic groups. Anglo-centric assumptions, for example, are at the root of what is learnt in the school curriculum in Britain.

Equal opportunities

Equal opportunities aims to ensure that no individual or group receives less favourable treatment by virtue of skin colour, race, gender, ethnic origin, disability, age, class or sexuality. It is geared towards enabling all people to have equality of access to provision of goods, services, facilities, premises and employment. It does not mean treating everyone the same.

Indirect discrimination

This takes place when a requirement or condition is applied equally to all races or ethnic groups, but a particular group is less able to comply with the requirements, in circumstances in which the requirement is not justifiable. For example, if a company has a requirement that all women wear skirts at work, and the requirement is applied to all ethnic groups this may have a discriminatory effect on Muslim women because their religion insists that they cover their legs. The company would have to reconsider its position if there was no business reason to insist that all women wear a skirt.

Institutional racism see 'Racism'

Institutional stereotyping; Personal racism see 'Racism'

Institutional aspects are embedded in the "normal" practices of institutions, the "business as usual" operations of institutions and the system. They can be seen to operate in:

- schooling: over-representation of certain black groups in exclusion statistics/under-representation in statistics on high achievement; practices in relation to religious holidays and religious and dietary provision, discriminatory treatment of black staff (considered to have high capacity to deal with 'difficult cases' on the one hand and a 5 to 1 chance of having capability procedures applied to them on the other hand)
- education: "structured omission" of anti-racist teaching/resources and strategies for confronting the structural disadvantages that black people face, Euro-centric approaches to knowledge and the planning and delivery of curriculum

- employment: workplace cultures, recruitment, selection and promotion practices, the application of grievance and disciplinary procedures, racial harassment, indignity at work
- policing: stereotyping of black people as part of "offender population", commonsensical assumptions that become received wisdom and part of the culture into which police officers are socialised, tendency to see the actions/activities of individuals as characteristic of the black population as a whole
- media: partial and biased reporting, reporting that confirms black people as an "out group"/minority not quite conforming to the ways of the white majority, pejorative images and defamatory articles, tokenism, track record in respect of number and position of black as compared with white journalists
- politics: status of black people within political parties and on local councils, selection procedures and the issue of "race" in political parties at local and national levels, political decision-making at local and central government levels in relation to services to black communities and to the black voluntary sector (health, education and training, social care)
- immigration: the racialisation of immigration, the numbers game/immigration and race relations debate, demonising of refugees and asylum seekers, attitudes to immigrants from Australia and New Zealand in comparison with those from Jamaica and Ghana
- health service: mental health and "race", accessibility of treatment and assumptions made about entitlement based on level of proficiency in English, assumption of "blacks trying to beat the system", lack of attention to heath disorders more prevalent among sections of the black population
- commerce: attitudes of banks and financiers towards black entrepreneurs and small business development, stereotyping of ethnic groups ("Asians are a safe bet. West Indians and Africans are dodgy...don't know anything about business")
- arts: the ghettoisation of the artistic and creative activity and products of black people, the designation of those as "ethnic art", the absence of black people in what is considered to be "mainstream" literature and art forms, the failure to acknowledge the contribution of black art to the evolution of societies and the development of artistic traditions across the world and throughout the ages

Personal (conscious or unconscious) racism: See 'Racism'

Personal stereotyping

The definition of institutional racism provided by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report sparked off a debate which is at one and the same time a genuine attempt by some people to grapple with the complexity of the issue as well as the opportunity for others to engage in obfuscation and humbug.

Broadly speaking, the argument goes as follows. If you say an organisation is institutionally racist, then it must follow that since the organisation is not the bricks and mortar nor the structures it operates, it can only be the individuals in the organisation (who operate those structures) that are racist. Therefore, one cannot blame officers in the Metropolitan Police, for example, for feeling that they have all been branded racist by Macpherson.

An individual (whether a member of an agent or oppressor group, or conversely a member of a target or historically oppressed group) is also affected by and has an effect upon institutions insofar as individuals are socialised, punished, rewarded and guided by institutions that maintain and perpetuate oppressive structures. Hence the legitimate attention that is given to the socialising power of canteen and staff room cultures and peer coaching of the sort that says: "Don't listen to all this politically correct claptrap. I have been at the coal face for sixteen years and I will tell you exactly what's going on here and how you must deal with these people from the outset. You know what they say...Start as you hope to continue or you've lost it completely".

This happens to be a record of "friendly advice" from a senior operational officer to a young police recruit in an urban area. But it could easily have been the words of officers in any other profession (health, medicine, the fire and rescue service, banking or a further education college). It was said in respect of the African-Caribbean population in that particular patch. It could have been said, similarly, about young males of South Asian heritage, lesbians and gays, refugees and asylum seekers or other target groups.

Personal aspects such as individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviour can be seen to operate at a number of levels, not necessarily overt.

- violence: verbal, physical and psychological/emotional - racial epithets, racist language, physical harassment and racist attacks and murders, devaluing people and rubbishing their efforts, attributing the failure of one or many individuals to the "deficiency" of the total population group to which they belong; giving the 'cold shoulder' to individuals and ignoring and avoiding them in a conspicuous manner
- ridicule: through "humour", caricature of dialects, cultural and religious practices; deliberately mispronouncing "ethnic names" or substituting English names and insisting on using them without the consent of the target
- harassment: linked to stereotypes, language (and especially the language of racism), the manner in which the law and the media project target people as problematic, troublesome and testing the tolerance of the "majority" population
- extortion: preying upon defenceless and vulnerable targets (exploiting workers whose immigration status is unclear or who are awaiting adjudication of their cases)

It is important to note how various elements of discrimination, structural, institutional, cultural and personal, interact and reinforce each other, often in ways which seem so "normal" that we do not even see them as part of the dynamics of quite unjustifiable treatment.

Prejudice

Racism is based on prejudice or discrimination. Prejudice means pre-judging, or taking a strong dislike to someone for no good reason. Prejudices are opinions we form without knowing the full facts and they usually come out of ignorance.

Racial discrimination

This takes place when a person of one racial or ethnic group is treated less favourably on the grounds of race or ethnic origin than a person of another racial or ethnic group would be in the same or similar circumstances. For example, preventing black employees from working within specific sections or at different levels within an organisation: deciding not to give a black person a job because they would be the only one in the team or section and may be given a difficult time by existing staff.

Racial harassment

This is a form of direct discrimination. Forms of harassment may include:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
- jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander through written or verbal communications
- isolation or non-co-operation at work, exclusion from various social activities.

Racism

All attitudes, procedures and patterns - economic, social and cultural – whose effect, though not necessarily whose conscious intention, is to create, maintain and extend the power, influence and privilege of one group of people over another. Racism operates at structural, cultural, institutional and personal levels. For example:

Cultural racism

- shared derogatory stereotypes
- partial/biased depiction in materials
- ignoring other cultures
- language and Anglocentric/Eurocentric curriculum

Institutional racism

- inability to provide for dietary or religious needs
- documents that require Christian names
- non-recognition of overseas qualifications
- word-of-mouth recruitment
- information only available in English
- institutional 'gate-keeping' (people, systems and processes designed to exclude)

Personal (conscious or unconscious) racism

- insults
- jokes
- derogatory stereotypes
- language
- behaviour

Stereotyping

A stereotype is a generalised and relatively fixed image of a person or persons belonging to a particular group. For example, stereotypes based upon supposed racial, ethnic or national traits include 'the passionate French', 'excitable Italians', 'whingeing Poms', 'black people are natural athletes'. Even seemingly positive stereotypes are discriminatory in that they take away a person's individuality. Members of racial and ethnic minorities are far more likely to be described in stereotypical terms than members of the majority group. Men and women from minority groups are frequently labelled with stereotypes that are both sexist and racist. Racial and ethnic stereotypes are offensive and should be challenged. (*See also 'Cultural stereotyping', 'Institutional stereotyping', 'Persoal stereotyping' and 'Structual stereotyping'.*)

Structural racism

Procedures and practices within an organisation or institution that supports and encourages direct or indirect racial discrimination, e.g. insisting on course entry requirements that do not recognise overseas qualifications and prior experience. Institutional racism is the root cause of the failure of many organisations, both large and small, to provide adequately a professional and appropriate service to many black people.

(Thanks to Professor Gus John and his colleagues Andrew Johnson and Stuart Ainsworth at the University of Strathclyde's Equality and Discrimination Centre for this section which is adapted from their Faculty Module: *Social Justice in Professional Roles.*)

These are major forms of inequality which structure our society in a dynamic and interactive way. They can be seen to operate in relation to different aspects of discrimination, such as racism, sexism, disability, homophobia and sectarianism.

Structural stereotyping

Structural aspects are located in the physical, legal and political structures of the society, including the law, politics, Parliament, religion, architecture and employment.

Taking race inequality and race discrimination as an example, structural aspects are:

- immigration and nationality laws and laws governing asylum seekers and refugees.
- the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 and their limitations notwithstanding the significant amendments that received royal assent in November 2000.
- the fact that the nature and intent of many laws and decisions reflect the predisposition and values of the political party in power. For example, the decision of Jack Straw, Home Secretary in the newly elected Labour Government, to order a full public inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence soon after Labour got into power in 1997, whereas previous Home Secretaries in the Conservative Government had refused to do so in the face of unprecedented lobbying. The Government's adoption of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report and the effect of that report on the process of the revision of the Race Relations Act 1976 are further – and in this instance positive – examples of structural aspects of inequality and discrimination.
- the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and its Report as proof that there could be the political will to put in place and maintain laws that underpin the oppression of black people as well as the political will to use legal and political structures to combat racial inequality and discrimination.

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